



MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
NATIONAL BUREAU FOR NGOs



PRESS RELEASE

**ON THE OUTCOME OF THE
VERIFICATION AND VALIDATION OF NON-
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN UGANDA**

NOVEMBER 13, 2019

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, through the National Bureau for NGOs, rolled out and executed a verification and validation exercise targeting all registered NGOs in the country as part of the efforts to operationalize and implement the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Act 2016. The Nation and particularly the NGO sector were informed of this activity in various media. Through this activity the NGO Bureau was exercising its mandate to register, regulate, monitor, inspect, coordinate and oversee all NGO operations in Uganda.

A National NGO Register was opened in 1989 following the establishment of the National NGO Board under the NGO Registration Act Cap 113 of 1989. Since then, there has not been a verification or validation of the register to establish the exact status of registered NGOs. Government between 2007 and 2017 through a consultative process developed the NGO Policy 2010, the NGO Act 2016 and the NGO Regulations 2017. In order to effectively implement this NGO regulatory framework, there was therefore need to carry out verification and validation of information about all NGOs. The purpose of the exercise was threefold namely;

- i) To build a reliable and credible data bank of information on all NGOs operating in Uganda for evidence-based decision making;
- ii) To help to determine any meaningful relationships, correlations and variations in the data between the NGO Bureau and the districts and to ascertain the status of NGOs operating in the Country; and
- iii) To enable the Bureau to produce a validated register for NGOs operating in the country.

The exercise started in November 2018 with the NGO Bureau internally verifying information on NGOs from its registry and database. The previous Press Conference held on the 7th day of August 2019 was a precursor to the launch of the National validation exercise for all registered NGOs with valid permits. The purpose of the validation was to match the results of the in-house verification exercise with the results of the validation in order to generate a credible register that would underpin other operations of the Bureau.

The validation process entailed NGOs with valid permits filling and submitting an online form to the Bureau together with a range of relevant documents. Information regarding the exercise was widely circulated to the stakeholders through various print and electronic media. At the commencement of the verification and validation exercise in November 2018, the National NGO Register indicated that there were **14,207** registered NGOs. The distribution of these NGOs was as follows;

- i) There were 12,809 Indigenous; 803 Foreign; 439 International; 85 Regional and 71 Continental NGOs by type of the organization.
- ii) The geographic spread was that; 3,637 NGOs operate in all regions of the country; 416 operate in at least one region but not all; 5,724 operate in Central region; 1,885 operate

in the Eastern region; 1,203 operate in the Northern region and 1,342 operate in the Western region.

- iii) The distribution of NGOs in the various sectors of operation is; 10,226 Social Development; 1,313 Health; 585 Education; 558 Justice, Law and Order; 474 Water and Environment; 379 Agriculture; 90 Public Administration; 142 Tourism; 71 Science, Technology and Innovation; 122 ICT; 87 Public Sector Management; 42 Trade, Industry and Cooperation; 18 Legislature; 43 Works and Transport; 9 Energy and Minerals; 42 Security and Defense and 6 NGOs in the Accountability sector.

However, upon verification of the 14,207 registered NGOs since 1989, as at 7th August 2019, it was noted that only **3,810** NGOs (27%) had valid permits while 10,397 (73%) had invalid permits. The distribution of the NGOs with valid permit was as follows;

- i) 1,660 NGOs operate in all regions of the country; 164 NGOs operate in at least more than one region; 1,264 NGOs operate in Central region, 294 NGOs operate in the Eastern region, 216 NGOs operate in the North and 212 NGOs operate in the Western region.
- ii) The distribution by type of the organization is that there are 3,003 Indigenous; 482 Foreign; 235 International; 53 Regional and 37 Continental NGOs.
- iii) A total of 17 key sectors were considered and the spread of the NGOs in these sectors is as follows; 2,704 Social Development; 389 Health; 188 Education; 186 Justice, Law and Order; 110 Water and Environment; 79 Agriculture; 30 Public Administration; 26 Tourism; 25 Science, Technology and Innovation; 24 ICT; 20 Public Sector Management; 9 Trade, Industry and Cooperation; 6 Leisure; 6 Works and Transport;

3 Energy and Minerals; 3 Security and Defense and 2 NGOs in the Accountability sector.

From 8th August to 7th September 2019, all registered NGOs with valid permits were subjected to a validation exercise. This exercise was expected to contribute immensely to weeding out inactive and unauthentic NGOs which were otherwise misrepresenting the status of the sector from the National NGO Register. It was also to help eliminate registered NGOs with unscrupulous, obscure and unclear operations that were damaging the reputation of the NGO sector.

In terms of response, many international NGOs quickly responded to the exercise and were the first to be validated. However some NGOs, especially the indigenous ones relaxed expecting an extension of the deadline of the exercise which did not happen. By the close of the validation exercise **2,118** registered NGOs with valid permits had validated.

DISTRIBUTION OF VALIDATED NGOs

a) Distribution by type of NGO:

No.	Type of NGO	Number of NGOs that validated
1	Indigenous	1,635
2	Foreign	254
3	International	205
4	Regional	7
5	Continental	17
	Total	2,118

b). Distribution by Geographical Area of operation

No	Region of operation	Total after Validation
1	All regions	284
2	Operating in at least one region but not all	351
3	Central Region	943
4	Eastern Region	247

5	Northern Region	139
6	Western Region	154
	Total	2,118

c). Distribution by sector of operation

No	Sector	Total after Validation
1	Social Development	1395
2	Health	185
3	Education	251
4	Justice, Law & Order	41
5	Water & Environment	78
6	Agriculture	67
7	Public Administration	25
8	Tourism	7
9	Science, Technology and Innovation	19
10	ICT	6
11	Public Sector Management	18
12	Trade, Industry and Cooperation	1
13	Legislature	1
14	Works and Transport	5
15	Energy and Minerals	4
16	Security and Defense	1
17	Accountability	12

GENERAL OBSERVATION AND CONCERNS RAISED DURING THE VALIDATION EXERCISE

General Observation

The NGO fraternity and other key stakeholders expressed their appreciation to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Bureau for NGOs for the efforts to streamline the NGO sector in the country, noting that this will help government to better appreciate the contribution of the sector, appropriately coordinate its activities and further harness the

relationship between government and the NGO sector.

Concerns raised during the validation exercise

- i) NGOs pointed out that the one-month period given was too short a time to enable all the registered NGOs with valid permits spread out across the country to effectively validate.
- ii) NGOs especially those located in rural areas expressed the challenge of reliable internet services which prevented their easy access to the website from which to get the validation forms.
- iii) Some NGOs feigned ignorance of the exercise claiming that some of them had not received the information announcing the exercise despite the fact that it was well publicized through print and electronic media. Others claimed to have received the notice late while other NGOs presumed that the exercise was for only those that had acquired permits long ago. Some section thought that since they had valid permits, they needn't register.
- iv) Some NGOs were not in possession of the required information and this was mainly due to internal governance challenges like founder member syndrome, poor record keeping, incapacitated boards and others.
- v) Some NGOs lacked basic IT technical skills to work with the online validation form.
- vi) There were specific concerns that were both system and non-system related and these included;

- a) The system related concern was that some NGOs failed to login because they confused the permit and registration numbers.
- b) The non- system related concerns were; lack of the required information and documents like NGO permit, certificate of registration and certificate of incorporation which were requirements to undertake the process; limited computer skills to fill the online form; NGOs visiting the wrong links for validation e.g. some NGOs visited the NGO Forum website instead.

With conclusion of this verification and validation exercise, this is to inform the NGO sector and other stakeholders that;

- i) The N G O Bureau shall publish the new Validated National NGO Register on the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Thereafter the Bureau shall be uploading an updated register on a weekly basis on the website www.mia.go.ug/resources/downloads/VNNR.
- ii) All subsequent operations of the NGO Bureau including registration, issuance and renewal of permits, inspection, monitoring, regulation, coordination and recommendation letters for NGOs to different stakeholders shall be evaluated against this validated database.
- iii) All NGOs which do not appear on the validated register should not operate. Stakeholders especially the District and Sub-county NGO Monitoring Committees, Financial Intelligence Authority, Uganda Police Force, Banks, Hotels and other actors should cross check the status of any NGO with the register on the website or with the NGO Bureau to ensure that such NGOs do not operate in any part of the country or transact with their institutions.

- iv) NGOs that did not validate by the close of the validation deadline and are in possession of a valid NGO permit should proceed to the NGO Bureau and fill an Information Request Form (IRF) before being added onto the validated database.
- v) NGOs that partially or incorrectly filled the validation forms during the exercise have been identified by the NGO Bureau and letters requesting them to submit the missing or incorrect data within a specified period will be sent to them.
- vi) The Ministry of Internal Affairs shall further ensure that the NGO Bureau is strengthened with adequate resources and a robust Information Management System to enable it to execute its mandate effectively.
- vii) The NGO Bureau shall proceed to develop and publish a comprehensive report on the State of NGOs in Uganda.

In conclusion, the verification and validation exercise laid a strong foundation for effective oversight of NGO operations in the country and implementation of the NGO Regulatory Framework. The Ministry through the NGO Bureau will not backtrack on this and will ensure that NGOs are transparent and accountable in their operations. This is to call upon all other key stakeholders to effectively implement and enforce the NGO regulatory framework. I commend the NGOs that responded to this important exercise and their contribution in complementing government efforts in this country. And lastly, I commend the NGO Bureau for their commitment and dedication to ensuring that this exercise was smoothly undertaken and also for their efforts in ensuring that this country has a vibrant and an accountable NGO sector.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

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GEN. ODONGO JEJE

MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS