



## **Resolution by the Delegates of the “Decent Employment Engagement Campaign for Refugees living in Kampala”**

**Held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at Eureka Place (Ntinda)**

**We**, the undersigned Re: Build Programme partners comprising of Trade Unions for Creative Arts Workers, Markets Employees, Civil Society Organizations’ workers, Free Trade unions, Artisan and General Workers, Transport workers’ union, Private Teachers union, union of Journalists and the Federation of Uganda Employers Association, Representatives from Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Equal Opportunities Commission, International Rescue Committee and Platform for Vendors in Uganda, having met in this engagement meeting whose theme was *“the Social Economic rights of refugees in Uganda”*.

**Aware** of the fact that *“a Refugee is a person who has unwillingly been forced out of his or her country and for safety has sought protection from another country and through registration, is accepted and recognized by that country”*.

**Understand** that Uganda presently hosts 1,535,000 million refugees (UNHCR). and given the freedom of movement, by April 2023, 139,208 refugees and asylum seekers were living in Kampala City. However, urban refugees do not get as much humanitarian support as their counterparts in the settlements.

**We know** that Uganda is a signatory to the international 1951 Refugee Convention. The national policies and laws including the 1995 Constitution, the Refugee Act, 2006, the Employment Act No.6 of 2006, the Labour Unions Act No.7 of 2006, the Labour (Dispute Settlement and Arbitration) Act No.8 of 2006, the Occupational Safety and Health Act No.9 of 2006, the Workers’ compensation Act, 2000 and the

National Social Security Fund Act; Amended 2021 all promote the rights of refugees. The National Development Plan (NPD) III calls for inclusion of refugees in national processes and crosscut those issues in national, sectoral and local government plans (integration). These policy and laws protects the rights of refugees and calls for ***fair and just treatment*** without discrimination on grounds of race, religion, sex, nationality, ethnicity, membership of a particular social or political groups and above all promote equal access to employment opportunities for refugees. In other words, refugees are entitled to fair wages and salaries, maternity/Paternity leave, they are free to work in a safe and healthy environment, they are entitled to annual and sick leave, social protection, they can join trade unions and participate in activities therein, refugees are protected from forced labour, sexual harassment and unfair termination from work.

**Concerned** that Uganda's informal sector currently stands at 87%. It is also true that most urban refugees are involved in this unregulated informal sector which makes them more vulnerable and unsafe.

**Having observed** that in Uganda social and economic exclusion is still high, access to justice by urban refugees is still a big challenge and the laws and policies are not adequately practiced towards effective protection of refugees. Urban refugees face multiple challenges including inadequate access to financial services, government development programmes and increasing incidences of discrimination (integration gaps/social cohesion gaps). There is high incidences of discrimination at work especially towards refugees, sexual and gender based violence especially to female refugees persists. Besides, knowledge gap on the rights and obligations of refugees are still rampant.

***Hereby commit*** the following:

1. The Equal Opportunities Commission committed to;
  - i) Provide free legal services to the vulnerable categories of people including refugees who face cases of discrimination and other forms of unfair treatment at work,
  - ii) Widely share the Commission's toll free number 0800 100440 and timely respond to grievances and complaints reported to them.

2. The Federation of Uganda Employers Association should task employers who are their members to profile their employees by nationality with emphasis of finding who really are refugee and act upon their issues as they happen,
3. Trade Unions should;
  - i. Develop model clauses in their Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) to focus on urban refugees,
  - ii. Recognise employers who have refugees among their workforce,
  - iii. Create a loose coalition of partners working in the refugee space to deliberately and elaborately assess, design and implement issues that address the well-being of urban refugees,*
  - iv. Advocate for inclusion of clauses on refugees in the employment amendment bill No. 2 of 2021*
4. *PLAVU, IRC and other partners should develop strategies and spaces for creating awareness to communities in Uganda about the urban refugees, the refugee policy, rights and their responsibilities.*

The Convener and the organizers of this engagement meeting which happened on **10<sup>th</sup> July 2023** at Eureka Place in Ntinda (Kampala), would like to thank all people and institutions that made this engagement possible. Special appreciation goes to IKEA and IRC for the financial support that made this event possible. We are very grateful to IRC for the moral and technical support. We are indebted to the participants and particularly the Trade Unions, Representatives from ministries and government departments and the Civil Society and the panelists for their enlightening and insights. Finally, thanks to PLAVU staff who were the front runners of this event.

Signed by Odaro Stephen Padde

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Executive Secretary  
*Plot 1850, Lubawo, Kamuli-Namugongo Rd, Kireka, Opposite Bethany High School*  
*Executive Sec: +256 754/78298901, Chairperson: +256 700641311, PO Box 107106,*  
*Kampala Uganda*

*Email: [plat4m4vendors.ug@gmail.com](mailto:plat4m4vendors.ug@gmail.com)*

*[info@plavu.org](mailto:info@plavu.org)*