

Progress on implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth in Uganda (2019)

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Sustainable Development Goal 8 is centred on the promotion and realisation of “sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” (United Nations 2016). More specifically targets 8.5 and 8.8 which are the main focus of this paper look to achieve “full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value;” and “Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment” respectively (United Nations 2016). This paper sets out to provide a concise analytical review of Uganda’s progress towards achieving SDG 8, by highlighting some of the main challenges, opportunities and key recommendations and measures that could be employed to accelerate the implementation of the goal and more specifically realise targets 8.5 and 8.8. The overall analysis will be centred around innovation, technology, domestication, partnerships, data and financing which are some of the key tenements and tools of SDG implementation.

The remainder of this paper is set out as follows- first, an overall national and regional review of some basic SDG 8 indicators to contextualise the status quo; second an assessment of the concurrent development agendas Uganda is signed up to (SDGs and Agenda 2063) and an evaluation of SDG domestication; third a review of structural implementation challenges and opportunities; fourth an examination of the data behind targets 8.5 and 8.8 and the implications for women’s empowerment and the final section will propose some recommendations on how to move towards successful implementation.

National level review of implementation of Goal 8 in Uganda

As illustrated in table 1 below Uganda’s overall SDG 8 progress on economic growth, has been low with a 5-Year Average GDP growth per capita which is some way off from achieving the SDG target of 7 percent annual growth (World Bank, 2018). It has been noted that across the continent, progress on the employment-to-population ratio has stagnated since the start of SDG implementation. While most African countries are rated as poor in this indicator with less than 65% of the adult population in employment Uganda has performed above this average with up to 83.2% of the adult population in employment. However, when it comes to the slavery score, Uganda is rated as average i.e. with a score 50 out of 100 based on (1) number of people in modern slavery, (2) governments response, (3) drivers of vulnerability to slavery. This indicates that the vulnerability to modern day slavery (i.e. forced labour) is still prevalent in the country indicating room for growth on both targets 8.5 and 8.8.

In similar vein, access to finance and financial inclusion are considered crucial to job creation and working capital which are key drivers of productive work and decent employment as targeted in SDG 8. Using access to an account (Bank or mobile money) as an indicator of financial inclusion, Table 1 illustrates that Uganda is performing above average on this indicator although with some significant room for growth. Uganda has also noted good progress in the ease of starting a business and is currently on track to achieve the indicator (Sachs et.al., 2018).

Table 1: Performance of EAC Countries on SDG 8`

Indicators

	5-Year Average GDP growth per capita (%)	Employment-to-population ratio	Slavery score (0-100)	Adults with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money service	Starting a Business score
East Africa					
Burundi	1.3	82	50	7.1	91.9
Kenya	2.7	59.7	80	81.6	83.2
Rwanda	4.5	87.7	50	50	82.7
South Sudan	9.5	N/A	0	8.6	55.7
Tanzania	3.4	76.4	50.8	46.8	48.4
Uganda	1	83.2	50	59.2	55.5

Source: Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa (2018) -Notes: N/A means no data available

Implementation of concurrent agendas and SDG domestication

A review of the implementation progress of SDG 8 requires careful consideration of the other development agendas to which Uganda is also committed. Competing or concurrent major development agendas with differing targets and areas of focus may have implications on successful SDG implementation. Beyond the SDGs, Uganda is most notably signed up to the Agenda 2063 of the African Union¹. It is therefore important to consider the repercussions of this on the national initiatives undertaken to mainstream SDGs and Agenda 2063 implementation as well as the integration, sequencing and prioritising of the two agendas. This ultimately raises the question of the capacity to coherently integrate multiple frameworks into national development and the impact of this on effective implementation. As a result of the Common African Position on the Post 2015 Development Agenda (CAP) of 2014, there are several significant synergies between the 2030 SDG Agenda and the AU's Agenda 2063. Both agendas broadly cover and emphasise social and human capital development, environmental sustainability institutional accountability and peace as key facets of their agendas. There has been a general alignment of the SDG's with agenda 2063 as illustrated with SDG 8 in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Alignment of Agenda 2063 and SDG 8

Sustainable Development Goal	Agenda 2063 Goals
8- Decent Work and Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goal 1: A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all - Goal 4: Transformed economies and job creation. - Goal 2: Well educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation - Goal 17: Full gender equality in all spheres of life - Goal 18: Engaged and empowered youth and children.

Source: Authors compilation from Sustainable Development Goals and AU agenda 2063

Even though there are some divergences with respect to targets, indicators and timelines, working towards Agenda 2063 has been and is widely seen as simultaneous progress towards the SDGs. In addition, the AU believes that Agenda 2063 is "broader in scope, covering social,

¹ Agenda 2063 comprises 7 overarching aspirations, 34 priority areas, 20 goals, 174 targets and 200 indicators. Agenda 2063 is divided into five 10-year implementation periods. The first 10-year implementation plan covers the period 2013-2023 and therefore has slightly different timelines from the 2030 SDG agenda.

economic and sustainability considerations in the broad context, political, cultural and other *African priorities*.” “[B]y implementing Agenda 2063 Member States will ipso facto be meeting global obligations under the SDGs”². Most importantly though, the AU and the UN have engaged in an alignment process that has gone beyond matching national development objectives with set targets or indicators. They have taken into consideration complementarities and synergies of the two agendas through the systematic development of suitable institutional and regulatory policy frameworks to set realistic and plausible national targets. Beyond this UNECA has developed an SDG mainstreaming tool along with roadmaps for domestic integration to support its member states with SDG implementation.

Domestication of SDGs in Uganda

Progress on SDG implementation cannot be considered without an assessment of the localisation and domestication of the SDGs in any given country. Domestication of the SDG’s involves the integration of the 2030 agenda into existing local and national development and budgetary plans. This typically includes a mapping exercises to establish the extent of convergence and gaps between national plans and the SDG goals and targets. To this end, Uganda was one of the very first countries to develop its 2015/16–2019/20 national development plan in line with the SDGs. It is estimated that up to 76 per cent of the SDGs targets are reflected and integrated into the plan and have accordingly been adapted to match the national context (OPM, 2017). In fact, the SDGs have also been integrated into the plan of various Local Governments, national sectors and MDAs (OPM, 2018). Having developed a 5 year and long-term national plan aligned to the SDGs; as a country that has ‘domesticated’ the SDGs into their local context it is envisaged that Uganda should have a more successful implementation of the goals.

In line with the guiding principle of partnerships for SDG implementation, the alignment process in Uganda brought together several stakeholders to deliver on the domestication of the SDG’s. A National Standard Indicator (NSI) Framework was developed by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) in collaboration with all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA’s) in to finalise the alignment process by reviewing a mapping of the SDG targets and matching them to NSI indicators. MDA’s also participated in collating and providing available information on the baseline and data source for each indicator. UBOS spearheaded the development of a tool to map NSI indicators in correspondence with specific SDG targets and outlined the data gaps with missing NSI indicators. These are in the process of being developed and in the pipeline to be included in the NSI (OPM, 2018). To underscore the importance of partnerships in the multidisciplinary approach to SDG implementation there is recognition that the tendency of MDAs, sectors, development partners and other stakeholders to work in isolation must be eliminated for more targeted and all-encompassing implementation (OPM, 2017).

² AU (2016) *Agenda 2063-SDGs*

Implementation Challenges and opportunities: data and tracking

Although there have been several initiatives and efforts to improve the monitoring and tracking tools and mechanisms Uganda still contends with a number of structural challenges that may negatively affect implementation progress. The National planning Authority identified some of these challenges as “weak multi-sectoral implementation planning, coordination gaps, data and reporting inadequacies, weak public private partnership and limited financial resources” (NPA, 2016). One of the main challenges to effective monitoring has been the availability of quality statistics to establish baselines from which to measure and monitor subsequent trends. This coupled with inadequate budgetary support to data activities and underdeveloped administrative data and civil registration could severely undermine the capacity of the National Statistical System to deliver the requisite SDG data needs (National Planning Authority, 2016). In addition, it has been a challenge to track the off-budget support to government programmes with direct implementation through Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), private sector, academia from Development Partners. As a result, it is difficult to accurately trace and monitor some of the resources being invested in the implementation of specific SDGs in the country (OPM 2017).

Despite significant data gaps across the continent and in Uganda which hinder the tracking and monitoring of the goals, initiatives like UNECA’s ECASStats have gone some way in bridging the gap by improving data accessibility. In addition, Uganda is part of the [UN global pulse lab](#), one of the first innovation labs in Africa bringing together multidisciplinary data scientists, engineers, specialists, academics and technical experts to collate and generate high impact data analysis tools in contribution to the UNs joint programming, monitoring and evaluation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Implementation Opportunities: Targets 8.5 and 8.8

Overall Uganda has been quite successful at aligning the SDG targets and objectives at the strategic level. What is left is for this alignment to be reflected in integration at the budgetary, Local Government, sector and project implementation levels. In fact, through NDP2 and target 8.5 Uganda set targets to ‘increase decent work coverage from 40 percent to 70 percent by 2020’ (National Planning Authority, 2016). To this end, some social development programs like the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) have been set to equip and empower women with the requisite skills and financial services to spur enterprise growth, value addition and economic empowerment and decent work. This goes hand in hand with sustained progress of the female to male ratio of Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR).

Figure 1: Ratio of female to male LFPR



Source: [World development Indicators](#)

In addition, there is also the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) that is aimed the socio-economic empowerment of the youth. Beyond the programmes and projects, there has been growing effort to improve the SDG gender promoting policy frameworks through the domesticating various gender conscious instruments into the national laws and policies. These include the National Gender Equality Indicators which are aligned with “global commitments to monitor gender related SDG Goals by harmonizing gender indicators in the second National Development Plan, Sectoral policies, plans and strategies” (Uganda National NGO Forum, 2017). Although the Equal Opportunities Commission is similarly mandated to address discrimination in line with the NDP II target to reduce marginalization by 4% by 2020; there is continued discrimination of women in vulnerable employment working at the bottom end of the domestic sectors and large agricultural, horticultural and textile value chains.

Decent work Vs Vulnerable employment and agricultural value chains

Targets 8.5 and 8.8 are mainly broken down into the following constituent indicators;

- 8.5.1.** Hourly earnings- the average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities.
- 8.5.2.** The unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities.
- 8.8.1.** The frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status.³
- 8.8.2.** Compliance of labour rights- the Level of national compliance with labour rights.

Although there are some data gaps on these exact indicators, Uganda has a wealth of surveys and data that can be used to construct a good picture on the various factors that contribute to these indicators, the preceding targets and broader goals at large. Most importantly, beyond the wages and hours worked it is important to consider the other factors that contribute to ‘decent work’ and the antithetic vulnerable employment. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) classifies own-account workers and contributing family workers to be in vulnerable employment. This kind of employment is typically by low earnings, limited productivity and various conditions that ultimately undermine workers’ fundamental rights. According to the 2016/17 UNHS 61% of the persons in employment were in ‘vulnerable employment’ with females (71%) being most likely to engage in vulnerable employment.

³ This is measured as the number of injuries per 100,000 employees.

Table 3: Uganda Labour market industry and occupational distribution

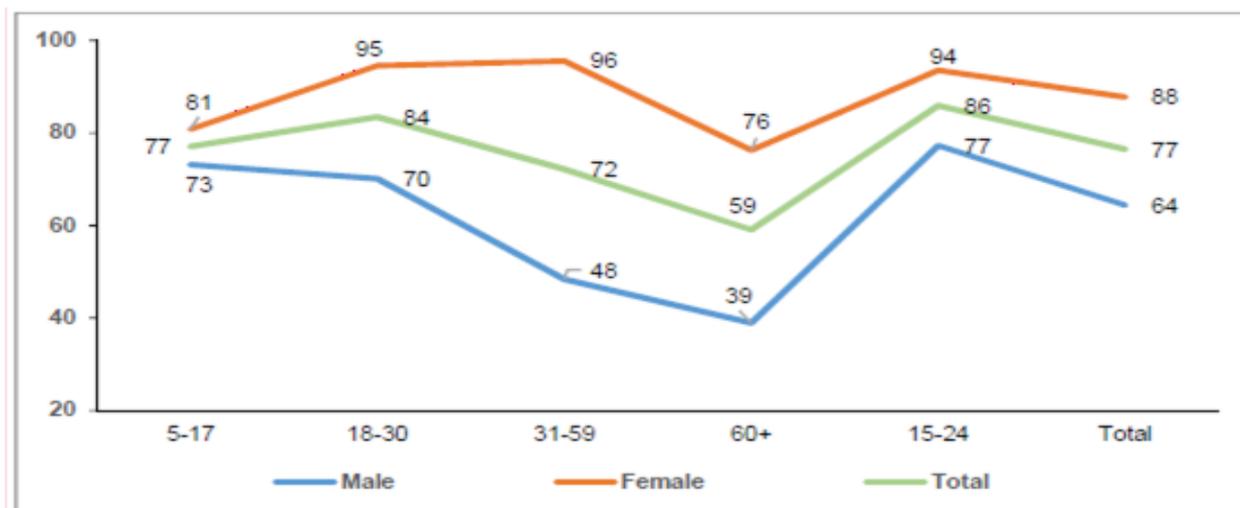
Characteristics	Male	Female
Status in employment		
Paid Employment	26.1	13.0
Employers	2.7	1.0
Own account workers	66.8	78.8
Contributing family workers	3.9	6.9
Others	0.4	0.3
The industrial level distribution of the working persons		
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	63.1	73.4
Trade	9.5	9.5
Manufacturing	6.2	3.4
Education	3.8	3.4
Transportation and Storage	4.7	0.0
Construction	4.2	0.2
Accommodation and food and service activities	1.0	3.0
Others	7.5	7.1

Source: Authors compilation from National Labour Force Survey 2016/17 -UBOS

The 2016/17 National Labour Force Survey estimated Uganda's working age population at nearly 19 million, an increase from 15 million in 2011/12. It was estimated that in both cases there were slightly more females than males in the working age population (52% of females in 2016/17 and 51% in 2011/12). In spite of this, there was a higher proportion of males in work than females -84% compared to 79% females- and only half as many women (13%) as men in paid employment (Table 3)- indicating that more women were engaged in non-work/non-paid activities. Even though the agriculture sector employs over 70% of the country's population, budgetary allocation to the sector in 2017/2018 of only 3.7% falls well below the 10% that Uganda committed to under the Maputo Declaration (Uganda National NGO Forum, 2017). This is an area for concern given that most women, poor and vulnerable employees are in the agriculture sector.

In addition, while over 60% of both men and women are own account workers, less than 4 % of them are employers. Understanding what is driving people towards self-employment is important to improving decent work, and survey results showed that the absences of salaried jobs (41%) was the main driver of self-employment. While more women than men were self-employed as a result of domestic/family responsibilities. This brings to the forefront the impact of Unpaid Care Work (UCW) on decent employment. A high proportion of women 88% are engaged in UCW when compared to 64% of males. Regardless of the age group the majority of UCW responsibilities continue to rest on the shoulders of women as illustrated in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Proportion of persons engaged in UCW by age group and sex



Source: National Labour Force Survey 2016/17 -UBOS

As outlined in SDG 8.8, workplace health and safety is a good barometer with which to measure decent work. The labour force survey examined the extent to which the working population was exposed to harmful working conditions. Up to 42% of the employed population were exposed to dust or fumes with only minor differences between men and women. Notably though workers in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector were more likely to be exposed to occupational injuries or illnesses.

In relation to target 8.8 and compliance to labour rights as well as the national frameworks and mechanisms to enforce labour rights, Uganda still has significant work to do. On the employees' side, trade union participation is still low across the entire labour force with most of the employed population (85%) not belonging to any trade union or similar employee/trade association. In addition, the proportion of workers in 'vulnerable' employment remains high with 70% of persons in paid employment only having an oral contract/agreement. The situation is similar in this regard for both men and women. Written contracts were more common outside of agriculture where only 4 % of the skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers had written contracts. It is worth noting though that the proportion of persons in paid employment with written contracts increased with an increase in the level of education. On the legislative side, the recent passing of the [Minimum Wage Bill](#) is a step in the right direction towards eliminating vulnerable employment however there are still many questions about the effective enforcement of a minimum wage.

Equal pay for equal work?

The observed gendered distribution across occupations and industry has implications for the gender pay gap, a metric that illustrates the difference in pay (or wages, or income) between women and men. As a measure of inequality, the gap can be a function of a number of things including education, experience occupation etc. However, the fact that Ugandan women are overrepresented in the more vulnerable low-paying occupations also means that they are overrepresented at the bottom of the income distribution. Table 4 illustrates that regardless of occupation, industry or sector, women not earn below the median wage they also earn much less than men.

Table 4: Median monthly cash earnings for persons in paid employment in the main job by sex, occupation, institution, and sector ('000 Shs)

	Male	Female	Total
Occupation			
Managers	700	500	600
Professionals	430	300	400
Technicians and associate professionals	500	350	400
Service and sales workers	200	150	180
Craft and related trades workers	250	120	240
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	300	260	300
Elementary occupations	100	72	96
Type of Institution			
Private	192	100	150
Public	450	400	400
Sector			
Formal Sector	420	400	400
Informal Sector	240	150	200
Private Household	140	60	70

Source: Authors compilation from National Labour Force Survey 2016/17 -UBOS

Conclusions and recommendations: SDG 8 and successful implementation

Uganda's overall SDG 8 dashboard score for 2018 is marked at an increasing score is assessed as moving at a rate that is required to achieve the SDG by 2030. Although, while the broader gender equality SDG 5 Score is increasing at a rate above 50% of the required growth rate it is still below the rate needed to achieve the SDG by 2030. Therefore, progress on the implementation of SDG 8 and the targets considered for this review is mixed. The targeted attainment of decent work and economic growth show some progress with major implementation and data gaps. The existence of multiple development agendas calls for expansive coordination, prioritisation management and administration of the implementation processes at both the national and sectoral levels. To this end, Uganda's focus should continue to be on establishing and aiming for realistic targets that are mindful of the country's existing context.

Contributing to better implementation

At the macroeconomic level, the broader SDG 8 target of economic growth is currently being pursued through heavy investments in infrastructure development. These investments high national priorities under the NDP and are expected to lead to social, economic and human capital development thereby contributing to SDG 8. At the Micro-level there is still a lot that can be done to realise the macro targets. More specifically, civil society and the private sector can contribute to more decent work through:

- Supporting the entrepreneurial culture to produce more ‘employers’
- Participating in skills development programs like the [Skills Development Fund](#) and [Skills Development Facility](#) both of which give special consideration to skilling women
- Identifying child labour and forced labour in supply and value chains and continued lobbying for remediation of abuses.
- Improving the proportion of employees covered by trade unions and similar bodies as well as collective bargaining agreements
- Developing comprehensive employment policy frameworks, including support to labour market institutions
- Championing the effective enforcement of the Minimum wage bill.

With regard to the gendered aspects of realising SDG 8 [Women’s World Banking Gender Performance Indicators](#) offer a good basis from which the private sector and civil society can approach SDG 8.8 and 8.5. These indicators⁴ allow for basic analysis of institutional outreach to women. It is crucial that more of these innovative mechanisms and tools are applied to the advocacy function of SDG implementation. It is imperative that all the technical work applied to alignment and domestication materialises in supportive policies actions, partnerships and programmes. In line with this, the participation of civil society and private sector is crucial to achieving the SDGs as they form the nexus of crucial partnerships for innovation, technology and financial inclusion. Their participation must be taken as complementary to, rather than a replacement of public and national initiatives. Finally, with respect to data, Uganda needs to prioritise funding for data which is not just important for tracking and monitoring but ultimately underpins the agenda in terms of developing and setting realistic domestic targets that guide the national development plans.

⁴ Economic inclusion; Non-discrimination; Capacity Building; Availability of a skilled workforce; Elimination of forced or compulsory labour

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