



Republic of Uganda

PRESS BRIEF ON SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY BILL (2021)

Fellow Citizens

Good morning,

1. The Cabinet of Uganda in its 37th Meeting held on 29th ^{November} ~~December~~ 2021, approved the Bill entitled “**Social Impact Assessment and Accountability Bill 2021**”, sponsored by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.
2. Social Impact Assessment (SIA) refers to a process of analyzing, developing strategies for continuous monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions and any social changes arising from such interventions. It involves evaluation of all impacts (immediate, short-term and long term) on humans and the ways in which people and communities interact with their social-cultural, economic and biophysical surroundings.
3. The background to the Bill is that:
 - i) Evidence available indicate that different development interventions in the country especially those related to infrastructure developments have often posed unplanned negative effects on the communities / societies / population hence a continuous challenge to the development process.
 - ii) Inadequate and haphazard Social Impact Assessment for instance have been witnessed in the Fort-Portal – Kamwenge Road construction, Isimba Hydro Power Project and Bujagali Hydro Power infrastructure projects among others. Occurrences of human rights abuse and Gender Based Violence have been common leading eventually to the suspension

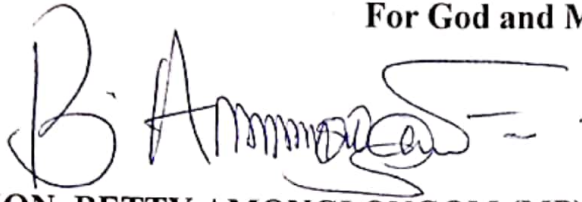
and loss of funding to a number of infrastructure projects in the Country, especially the roads projects in the recent past, including; the Fort-Portal Kamwenge Road and Tororo-Soroti-Kamdini Road.

4. The Bill seeks to rectify this Regulatory Gap. The Bill if enacted into Law will guide the enforcement of key social safeguards, which are not given adequate prioritization during planning for the infrastructure projects as is evident in several economic, social, institutional and technological developments in the Country.
5. The objective of the Bill is to:
 - i) Provide processes through which the Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies can better understand how the socio-cultural, institutional, historical and political contexts influence the social development outcomes of specific investment projects and sector policies;
 - ii) Enhance equity, strengthen social inclusion and cohesion, promote transparency and empower the poor and the marginalized and vulnerable in the design and implementation of public projects;
 - iii) Provide mechanisms to identify the opportunities, constraints, impacts and social risks associated with policy and project design;
 - iv) Provide a framework for dialogue on development priorities among social groups, civil society, persons affected by the project, grassroots organizations, different levels of government and other stakeholders;
 - v) Define social impact assessment in terms of efforts to assess, appraise or estimate, in advance, the social consequences and provide for mitigation measures;
 - vi) Provide systematic and interdisciplinary principles to guide the undertaking of social impact assessment;
 - vii) Provide a framework for dialogue on development priorities among social groups, civil society, grassroots organizations, different levels of government and other stakeholders;
 - viii) Provide approaches for identifying and mitigating the potential social risks, including adverse social impacts, of investment projects;
 - ix) Provide for social accountability and mechanisms for social assistance for the vulnerable people;

- x) Prepare communities to benefit from planned interventions;
 - xi) Provide a mechanism for predicting social response by profiling planned interventions;
 - xii) Provide for a social registry at village level to feed into the national single registry to guide the targeting and planning process for the vulnerable groups for assessing eligibility to accessing social programmes;
 - xiii) Provide for social impact bonds;
 - xiv) Provide for the Social Impact Licence; and
 - xv) Provide for the social protection measures for the affected population.
6. What will Change if the Bill is enacted into Law:
- i) The level of community/civic engagement (ordinary citizen participation) in planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, as well as accountability in development intervention (projects) will be enhanced.
 - ii) Social impact assessment will be mandatory for all projects earmarked for the Social Impact Assessment. Penalties will be prescribed for non-compliance as will be prescribed under the Law.
 - iii) Certificates of Social Impact will be issued by the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development on the advice of the Social Impact Evaluation Committee, before commencement of implementation of the development projects.
 - iv) Social Impact Assessment will be done concurrently with the Environment Impact Assessment.
 - v) Corporate social responsibility by development practitioners and businesses will be enhanced as they will be required to consider the affected human beings as core in the socio systems and development processes.
 - vi) The Law will regulate the standards; and ensure professional development of Social Scientists, Anthropologists, Sociologists and Social Workers, which creates new business avenues.
 - vii) The process of social impact assessment will generate Non -Tax Revenue for the economy through fees, licenses.

7. Overall, the Law will address issues of Social Risk Management in the development processes of our Country.
8. As I conclude, the Ministry will soon table the Bill in Parliament. I would therefore like to implore the public to pay keen interest in the processes and ensure that we get the best out the Social Impact Assessment Bill 2021.

For God and My Country.



HON. BETTY AMONGI ONGOM (MP)

MINISTER OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

December 1, 2021