



**MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**NATIONAL BUREAU FOR NGOs**



**OPENING REMARKS BY**

**HON. MAJ. GEN. KAHINDA OTAFIIRE  
MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**DURING THE DIALOGUE MEETING**

**BETWEEN**

**MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS  
(NATIONAL BUREAU FOR NGOs)**

**AND**

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**HELD ON 29<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2022**

**AT**

**GOLF COURSE HOTEL (BANQUET HALL), KAMPALA**

H.E. The Ambassador of Ireland

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hon. Minister of State Ministry of Internal Affairs

Hon. Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Defense and Internal Security

Permanent Secretary Ministry of Internal Affairs

Permanent Secretary Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development

Permanent Secretary Ministry of the Presidency

Permanent Secretary Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development

Permanent Secretary Ministry of Local Government

The Executive Director NGO Bureau

Government Officials from different MDAs

Development Partners

NGO Representatives

Distinguished Guests

All protocol observed

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning to you all.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this second quarterly dialogue meeting for the financial year 2022/2023 between the Ministry of Internal Affairs, NGOs and different key stakeholders. The Ministry of Internal Affairs as always is committed to having these quarterly dialogue meetings with the NGO Sector primarily because they are a requirement under the NGO Act 2016 but also because they provide an opportunity for Government to listen to the concerns of the NGOs in the country.

The last Dialogue Meeting was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2022 at this same venue. I would like to specially thank the Embassy of Ireland, and in particular H.E. Kevin Colgan the Ambassador for the continued sponsorship of the dialogue meetings. I also take this opportunity to appreciate colleagues from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the NGO Bureau, Human Rights Center Uganda and Uganda National NGO Forum for the tremendous work done in ensuring we continuously have these quarterly dialogue meetings. I am confident that today's deliberations will be significant in enhancing the cordial relationship between my Ministry and the NGO sector.

At the last dialogue meeting a number of commitments were made and I will give responses to the progress made on their implementation. For now, I would love to inform you that;

- I. There has been a constant plea from the NGO Sector to have a Board of Directors of the NGO Bureau and Adjudication Committee. This issue was re-echoed and discussed in the last dialogue meeting. I am pleased to inform the NGO fraternity and all stakeholders that the members of the NGO Bureau Board of Directors and Adjudication Committee have been appointed what remains include formalities like; them picking and accepting their appointments, handover from the previous Board of Directors, swearing in and other formalities including induction to be finalized before they fully take up their responsibilities in due course you will get to know the members of the Board of Directors and Adjudication committee.
  
- II. Having invested time and resources over a ten-year period to put in place a comprehensive NGO Regulatory Framework, I take this opportunity to update the sector on the progress of the review of the NGO Policy 2010 and NGO Act 2016 that is ongoing. We are at the point of conducting a Regulatory Impact Assessment. We hope that by end of February 2023 this Regulatory Impact Assessment would have been conducted and thereafter consultations with different stakeholders including the NGOs at different levels and in different parts of the country will be conducted. We are committed to ensuring that we remain cognizant of the dynamics of the sector and shall endeavor to ensure the

relevance of existing NGO policies, laws and regulations. I invite NGOs to be part of the process of reviewing the Policy and Act through the NGO Bureau.

III. As communicated in the previous dialogue meeting, the process of recognizing and appreciating the contributions of the NGO Sector by producing a report on the State of NGOs over the 30 years is underway. With availability of resources we commit to continue this exercise. This report once ready will be presented to cabinet for their consideration before having it launched. Thereafter the State of the NGO Report will be produced annually to appreciate the contribution of the sector. I also take this opportunity to encourage individual NGOs to profile and document their contributions to this country so that their success stories are appreciated.

IV. As you are aware Government is in the process of rationalizing a number of Government agencies and the NGO Bureau is affected by the process. The Ministry has received a lot of concerns from different stakeholders. This is to assure you that the functionality and roles of the NGO Bureau will remain.

- V. I am aware that COVID -19 greatly affected the funding of the NGO sector and this is to call upon the sector to think through how they can overcome this funding challenge. There is need for the sector to further research on this and also build its capacity in mobilization of resources. This will enable them address their sustainability challenges.

As I conclude, I would like to call upon;

- I. NGOs to know that we are partners in the development of this country and the health of this sector is of importance to us however there is need to promote and maintain high standards of governance, transparency and accountability in their operations. Ensuring compliance with the NGO Act, 2016 and the relevant laws is very important. There is need for more financial transparency and community participation by NGOs.
- II. All Local Government Authorities and Line Ministries to ensure that they build their capacity at all levels to ensure that they understand the NGO sector and also know their responsibilities and obligations. This involves responsibilities like; signing of Memoranda of Understanding with NGOs to clearly define their relationship and obligations in guiding the management of programs or projects. We have made numerous calls to the Local Government authorities not to charge any fees for these processes since this frustrates the efforts of NGOs in the development

of the country. We are aware that there are numerous incidences of the Local Government officials ignoring our call and continue to demand for such payments that are un lawful and illegal I now call the sector to demand for a receipt for any services they are made to pay for at the district and avail that evidence to the NGO Bureau for further management.

- III. NGOs to be part of common working collaboration platforms between them and the Government whereby not all issues should wait for a dialogue meeting but can be address at such a level.

In conclusion, Government continues to recognize the contribution of NGOs and remains committed to ensuring that NGOs enjoy their constitutional guarantees and all rights that are enshrined in various global, regional and national instruments. Government will continue to ensure that NGOs have a conducive and enabling environment and that NGOs are operating in an accountable, transparent and work in an orderly manner for the development of the country.

I have in previous dialogue meetings called upon the different stakeholders both state and non-state to support the NGO Bureau with the necessary resources I once again I take this opportunity to strongly make that call.

I want to thank everyone present in their different capacities for being a part of this Quarterly Dialogue Meeting. I would love to encourage more interface, collaboration and information sharing between the NGOs and key stakeholders in Government to cure any form of mistrust and promote constructive partnerships. I thank all NGO Leaders and funders of this Dialogue Meeting and commit that we shall continue to regularly have these Quarterly Dialogue Meetings. I wish you all fruitful deliberations during the meeting and declare this meeting open.

**FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY**