MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL BUREAU FOR NGOs

OUTCOME DOCUMENT OF THE
QUARTERLY DIALOGUE MEETING BETWEEN THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND NGO LEADERS
22nd September, 2020, Serena Hotel -Victoria Conference Hall

A.	MATTERS FOR INFORMATION
	1. Commitment by the Minister of Internal Affairs to continue having Quarterly Dialogue Meetings with the next meeting for Quarter 2 scheduled to take place on the 10th November, 2020. 2. The Irish Embassy committed to continue supporting the Quarterly Dialogue Meetings since: it is an important platform for the common good in a shared ground; benefits key players; helps understand issues of convergence; facilitates mutual respect and partnership for shared understanding and clarity; preservation of civic space and constructive dialogue. 3. A call by the UN Resident Representative to strengthen partnerships for development and noted that shared responsibility and good partnerships are key tenets for any nation to develop. 4. In addition to the Quarterly Dialogue Meetings, there shall be Reflection Meetings and Community Dialogues countrywide, the next meeting to be held in Kapchorwa for Sebei Sub-region in the week of 28th September to 2nd October 2020. 5. The Ministry of Internal Affairs through the NGO Bureau carried out a verification and validation exercise between 8th August and 7th September 2019 to; establish a reliable and credible data bank to improve its decision making; appreciate the contribution of NGOs to National development and to expose non-existent organizations and those operating illegally. As at 18th September 2020, there were 2,235 NGOs permitted to operate in the Country out of the 14,207 NGOs before the verification and validation exercise.

6. The NGO Bureau publishes an Updated National NGO Register (UNNR) of NGOs permitted to operate on the Ministry of Internal Affairs website www.mia.go.ug/resource/downloads every Monday morning.

7. Government recognizes the implications of Covid-19 on operations of NGOs which has both negative aspects such as reduced funding, loss of employment by NGO staff and inhibited implementation of activities and also the positive aspect of NGOs adopting new modes of operating that has cut physical meeting costs, travels and other related costs. It has also led to funding opportunities.

8. Mr. Okello Stephen was appointed as the substantive Executive Director of the NGO Bureau. He is an Advocate with 15 years of service experience in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and in particular the NGO Bureau.

9. The NGO Bureau recruited a number of key senior staff in the first phase of its recruitment plan as part of the efforts to improve the quality of service delivery.

10. The Head Office of the NGO Bureau moved from the Ministry of Internal Affairs Headquarters to the 3rd Floor, Kingdom Kampala building on Nile Avenue on 29th May 2020.

11. Plans are underway to roll out in a phased manner the full automation of the NGO Bureau services.

12. The Minister of Internal Affairs is in the process of constituting and appointing members of the Adjudication Committee that is an appeals body for aggrieved parties in the NGO sector. The NGO (Adjudication Committee Procedure) Rules 2020 were gazetted in March 2020.

13. There has been a remarkable improvement in enforcement and compliance with the NGO Act, 2016 and other relevant Laws with enhanced monitoring and inspection of NGO activities across the country.

14. The process of reviewing the National NGO Policy is ongoing. The NGO Sector players were called upon to participate in this process.

15. In order to enhance collaboration, coordination and efficiency between the key Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government, plans are underway to form an Inter-Agency Platform headed and hosted by the NGO Bureau.

16. The Ministry of Internal Affairs through the NGO Bureau is in the process of developing guidelines for identifying NGO Representatives on the NGO Bureau Board of Directors, District NGO Monitoring Committees and Subcounty NGO Monitoring Committees.

17. NGOs should be more transparent and accountable in their operations with emphasis on more financial transparency and community participation.

18. There was a call on Development Partners not to make excessive and unrealistic demands that may be an obstacle to openness and transparency in the NGO sector.

19. Local Government authorities and line Ministries should ensure that they sign Memoranda of Understanding with NGOs to clearly define their relationship and obligations in guiding management of programs/projects.

20. The Local Government authorities especially the Chief Administrative Officers should ensure that they fully operationalize District NGO Monitoring Committees and Sub-Country NGO Monitoring Committees.

21. During this election period, NGOs must remain non-partisan and not engage in fundraising or campaigning to support or oppose any political party or candidate for any appointed office or elective political office.

22. There was a call upon the different stakeholders both state and non-state to continue supporting the NGO Bureau with the necessary resources or lobbying and advocating for more so that it can effectively and efficiently deliver on its mandate.

23. Government continues to recognize the contribution of NGOs and remains committed in ensuring that NGOs enjoy their constitutional guarantees and all rights that are enshrined in various global, regional and national instruments. It will also ensure that NGOs have a conducive and enabling environment.

24. NGOs should operate in an accountable, transparent and work in an orderly manner in their efforts to contribute to the development of the country.

	25. There was a call for more interface, collaboration and information sharing between NGOs and key stakeholders in Government to cure any form of mistrust and promote constructive partnership.		
B.	**COMMITMENTS**		
SN	**ISSUE**	**COMMITMENT**	**RESPONSIBLE ENTITY**
1	Establishment and operationalization of the District NGO Monitoring Committees (DNMCs)	Communication was made by the Ministry of Local Government to all District Accounting Officers (Chief Administrative Officers and Town Clerks) to operationalize District NGO Monitoring Committees. Follow up would be made.	a) Ministry of Local Government b) Ministry of Internal Affairs c) NGO Bureau
2	Illegal fees collected by Local Governments	Illegal fees being charged and collected by Districts should be reported with evidence of such payments.	a) Ministry of Local Government b) Ministry for Presidency
3	Tensions between NGOs and Security Agencies	i). An NGO Desk to be opened at the Ministry for Presidency Secretariat to report complaints regarding RDCs.	Ministry for Presidency
		ii). Build the capacity of the Security Agencies	NGO Bureau
4	Uncoordinated and arbitrary state interactions with the NGO sector	i). Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies should always consult or work with or through the NGO Bureau where information or action is needed on an NGO.	Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies
		ii). Establishment of an Inter-Agency Forum for NGOs to create an avenue through which the NGO Bureau can proactively and regularly engage with other Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies.	NGO Bureau
		iii). In regard to the letter from Office of the Prime Minister to NGOs operating in refugee settlements, the NGO Bureau and the Office of the Prime Minister will address the matter. Desk Officers for the two entities have already been nominated to coordinate any NGO issues.	Office of the Prime Minister

5	Negative narratives and attacks from government officials	The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the NGO Bureau intend to engage a number of MDAs to appreciate the NGO regulatory framework and the contribution of NGOs. During the last meeting, it was resolved that separate dialogue meetings with security agencies should be held country wide. The same will apply to a number of MDAs.	a) Ministry of Internal Affairs b) Security Agencies c) NGO Bureau
6	Shrinking space for citizens' expression and UCC going beyond its mandate by taking up management of content instead of spectrum	UCC is mandated to regulate Online broadcasting and has set Minimum Broadcasting Standards for that purpose. NGOs running Websites are not bound by the minimal broadcasting standards set by Uganda Communications Commission (UCC).	a) Ministry of Internal Affairs b) UCC c) NGO Bureau
		Need for a meeting between the Ministry of ICT, UCC, NGOs and Journalists	a) Ministry of ICT b) UCC c) Journalists' umbrella body d) NGOs
7	Unresolved complaints about NGO office break-ins	i). An NGO Desk to be opened at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations for handling NGO complaints of break-ins and also receiving unresolved complaints of office break-ins.	Uganda Police Force
		ii). A conclusive report on NGO raids and break-ins be produced by the Police.	Uganda Police Force
8	Use of terminology like "Orders from Above"	There is no such thing "Orders from Above" in Uganda Police Force or any laws. Any such incidents should be reported to the Professional Standards Unit of Uganda Police Force, District Police Commanders and Officers In-Charge.	a) Uganda Police Force b) NGOs
9	Fines charged by the NGO Bureau	The fines are provided for under Section 32(6) of the NGO Act 2016.	a) NGOs b) NGO Bureau
10	Name calling of NGOs e.g. Mercenaries	Such name calling is based on evidence and does not refer to all NGOs. Affected NGOs need to change their behavior to avoid it.	NGOs

11	Double incorporation	The organizations affected NGOs should come up with a resolution to get rid of one incorporated entity.	a) URSB b) Affected NGOs
12	Police violation of the rights of journalists	Need for a meeting between Uganda Police Force and the Journalist on rules of engagement	a) Uganda Police Force b) Journalists' umbrella body
13	The process of applying for and being granted Income Tax Exemptions	Applications are online and NGOs were requested to apply on time. They should contact the URA Client Relations Manager for assistance	a) URA Client Relations Manager b) NGOs
14	Need to harmonize NGO budgets with that of Districts	NGOs should cooperate and work closely with and also harmonize their budgets with that of the Districts.	a) Local Governments b) NGOs
		Districts should issue timely invitations to NGOs for Budget Conferences.	Local Governments
		NGOs should identify competent representatives to attend and participate in the Budget Conferences	NGOs
15	The proposed rationalization of the NGO Bureau	The NGO sector develops a justification for retaining the NGO Bureau as an independent and semi-autonomous entity and submit to the NGO Bureau.	NGO Sector
16	A proposal to have an NGO Annual Sector Review	The proposal to have an NGO Annual Sector Review was fully embraced and is to be undertaken with effective from FY 2020/2021.	a) NGOs b) NGO Bureau
17	Need for partnership principles	The NGO sector should come up with a write up on the draft partnership principles to be presented at the next dialogue meeting.	NGO Sector
18	The need for an NGO Fund	A paper on the pros and cons of creating an NGO fund be developed and presented at the next dialogue meeting.	NGO Sector
19	The need to promote self-regulation in the NGO Sector	NGOs should appreciate, adopt, promote and support self-regulation.	NGO Sector
20	Need to address election related issues	NGOs handling election issues should organize themselves for a separate meeting where the subject matter of elections reforms would be discussed.	a) Independent Electoral Commission b) NGO Sector

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