

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF MINORITIES IN UGANDA

Existing Legal, Policy and Institutional
Mechanisms

A presentation

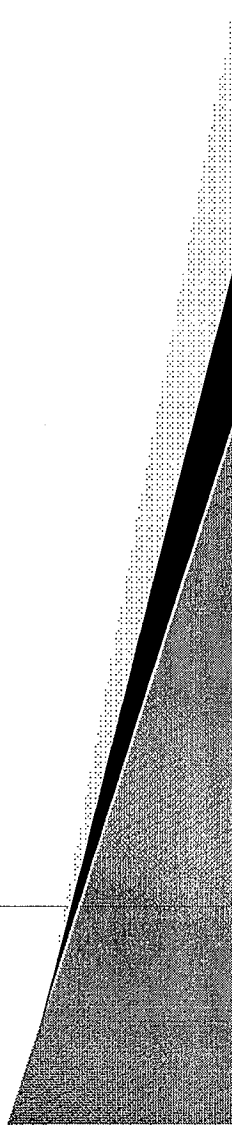
By

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Introduction

- ▶ Background on minorities in Uganda
- ▶ Legal framework
- ▶ Policy Framework
- ▶ Institutional Mechanisms
- ▶ Challenges

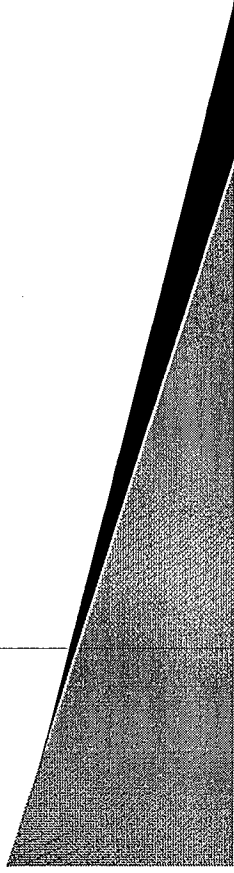


Background

- ▶ Minorities in Uganda
 - Since pre-colonial times, minority groups have historically been marginalized socially, economically and politically.
 - Minorities classified as disempowered groups regardless of numerical size;
 - Since 1986 the political landscape has changed to allow for political participation of minority groups.
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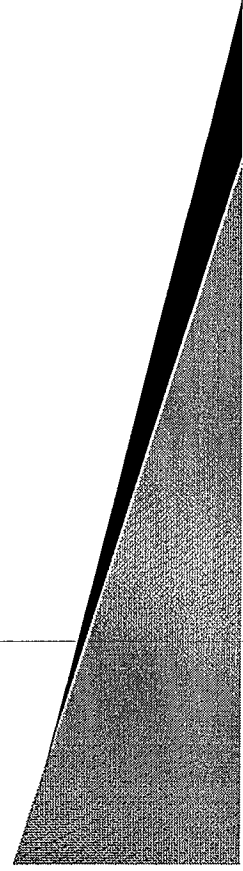
Legal Framework

- International and Regional Treaties and Conventions
 - Uganda has ratified the ICCPR, CEDAW, and ACHPR which promote the political participation of minority groups.
- Domestic legislation



Cont'd

- The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda: 1995
 - Guarantees specific rights to each group of minorities; chapter four talks about the Protection and Promotion of Fundamental and other Human Rights and Freedoms
 - Article 36: Allows for participation of minorities in decision making processes with regard to national plans



Cont'd

- **Local government Act 1997**
 - The Act ushered in the decentralization system which allows for broad participation of citizens in decision making at the local level.
 - Political space for participation widened through elections at Local Councils I-V levels and Parliament
 - Established minimum quotas for some minority groups



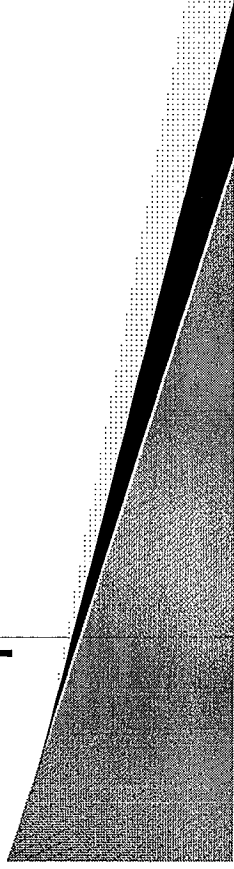
Policy Framework

- ▶ **The National Equal Opportunities Policy (NEOP) 2006**
 - outlines frameworks and institutions for action for addressing inequalities and marginalization of discriminated groups
- ▶ **Community Mobilization and Empowerment Strategy (CMES) 2007**
- ▶ **Equity Promotion Strategy**

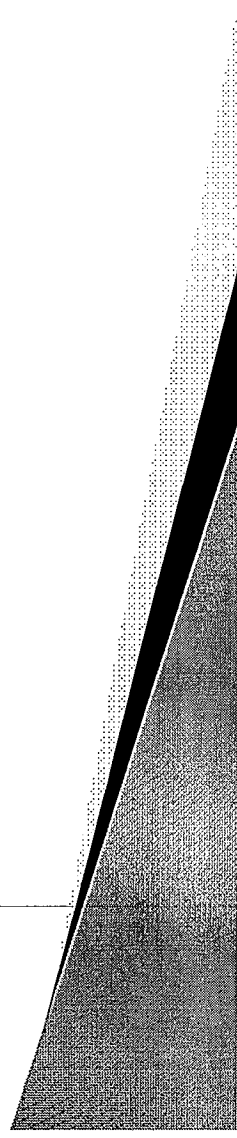


► Education Policies

- Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education
- ABEK Program in Karamoja
- 1.5 additional points for girls for admission to University
- Four additional points for persons with disabilities for admission in tertiary institutions
- Improved access to education allows minority groups to compete for political positions.

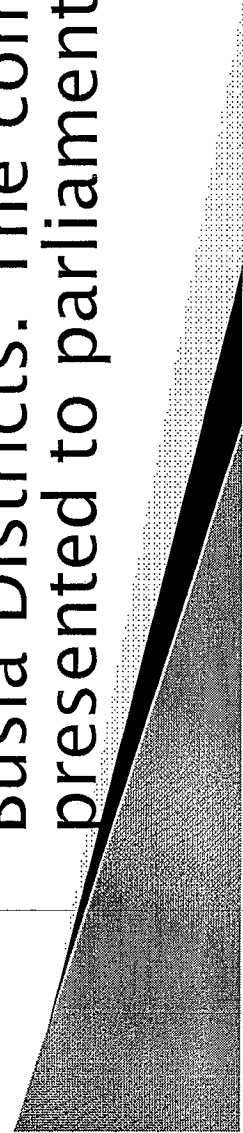


- One third of local council members must be women
- Two seats reserved for persons with disabilities at each local government level
- Political participation enhanced through the Local Government Development Program.



Institutional Framework

▶ Parliament of Uganda

- Ensures that the requisite legal framework and implementation mechanisms are in place to promote political participation of minority groups;
 - Standing Committee on Equal Opportunities mandated to promote and monitor measures for equalization of opportunities;
 - Committee undertook a fact finding mission amongst some ethnic minority groups the Ik in Karamoja region, Batwa in Bundibugyo and Kisoro and the Bahehe in Busia Districts. The committees report was presented to parliament and adopted.
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◦Political space opened through representation of certain groups in Parliament.

Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development

◦guides, implements and monitors government programs geared towards protection and advancement of rights of the various minority groups which includes political participation.

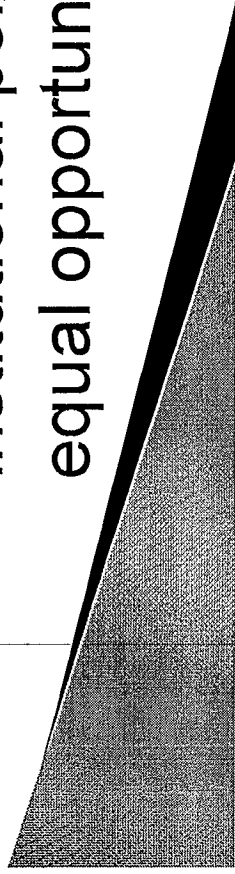


◦ **Equal Opportunities Commission Act 2007**

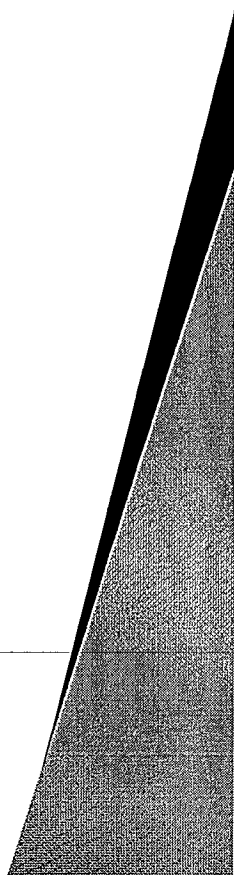
- The Act establishes an Equal Opportunities Commission

Commission mandate is to eliminate discrimination of minority groups and promote equity.

Functions include: to monitor compliances, investigate complaints, facilitate public awareness and ensure institutional policies are compliant with equal opportunities.



Government budgetary support to the commission
is commendable.



Challenges

- ▶ Limited access to basic social services by ethnic minority groups as well as land alienation. Without access to services and land , participation of minority groups is minimal or almost absent.
- ▶ Inter group and inter state conflicts remain a major challenge.
- ▶ Lack of policy on ethnic minorities.

