



**Women's Major Group Intervention to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF):
"Progress, gaps and obstacles: are we on track for leaving no one behind?"
10:00 AM on July 9, 2019
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My name is Elizabeth Ampairwe from the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) in Uganda and the Women's Major Group.

We live in a patriarchal world, which leaves many people behind, especially women and girls, and particularly in the global south.

In Uganda, women and girls continue to face multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion. Discriminatory laws limit women's access to health and rights. Restrictions on abortion inhibit bodily autonomy. Action on HIV is inadequate. The teenage pregnancy rate is 25% and pushes girls into economic dependence and a vicious cycle of poverty. Maternal mortality rate is high - 336/100,000 live births. The burden of unpaid care work on women and girls violates human rights to education, political participation, decent work and leisure.

In Botswana, persons with disabilities face gross discrimination and limited access to productive employment. Although child marriage is illegal, 2 million people aged 12-18 are forcibly married, relegating them to sexual slavery. Many people below age 16 do not have national identity cards, which renders them effectively stateless.

Women in humanitarian contexts such as in the MENA region face particular obstacles, including harmful practices.

In Pakistan, military budgets and debt servicing consume about 80% of the national budget. The 2019-2020 annual budget reduced federal funding for health by half and for education by 20.5%. Privatization and corporate capture of health care has increased out-of-pocket

expenditure, which stands at 65.2%. Prices of medicines, including essential and life-saving drugs, are at a 40-year high.

Despite women's critical leadership, shrinking space for civil society undermines the work of women human rights defenders, environmental advocates, and peacebuilders.

The HLPF must dramatically accelerate coherence and coordination. Gender equality and women's meaningful participation and rights must be at the center of the 2030 Agenda.