A Word from the Editor

Dear Readers;

We are proud to bring you our first newsletter for 2019. The amendment of the Persons with Disabilities Bill 2016 might have been disappointing but there is much more to celebrate. Skilled persons with Disabilities are slowly receiving much needed support in employment and families are promoting disability awareness within their communities. Voices of Women with Disabilities were heard at high level engagements like the United Nations Economic and Social Council’s Humanitarian Affairs Segment in Geneva and the Women Deliver conference in Vancouver.

A lot remains to be done in terms of advocacy, inclusion and empowerment of Girls and Women with Disabilities in Uganda.

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**Our Bill! Our Rights!**

The inadequate reference to the needs and rights of Girls and Women with Disabilities in terms of social inclusion, employment, access to justice, health services amongst others in the legal instrument of power, supposed to accord them their rights compelled Girls and Women with Disabilities to storm their national headquarters in Kisaasi for an impromptu conference on the Persons with Disabilities Bill 2018.

The Women and Girls with Disabilities were of the view that the bill had not been written well since it was not in compliance with the International laws governing disability, the UNCRPD Article 6 and SDG 5 which call for the protection of Girls and Women with Disabilities nor contributing to a change for the better in the quality of their lives as Persons with Disabilities.

The various meetings between the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development where the Bill is domesticated and the representative organizations for Persons with Disabilities yielded the desired goal of amendment because the Bill is currently awaiting Presidential approval.

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**Celebrating Our Accomplishments**

NUWODU and her Women and Girls with Disabilities from the District Associations of Bunyangabu and Asamuk sub-county in Amuria district took part in the global and district celebrations of Women’s Day.

The national celebration was marked with a colorful ceremony at Rwimi Primary School under the presence of His Excellence Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, flanked by female representatives from Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies. Girls and Women with Disabilities joined the march led by the female police parade to appreciate their gender and accomplishments as women.

With the theme focusing on innovative ways to advance equality and the empowerment of Women and Girls with Disabilities, particularly in the areas of social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure, the President of Uganda urged Women at large to think of other sources of income in ICTs, conservation, tourism and advised Women councils to develop a leadership SACCO where government could contribute and have their own bank to settle arising problems.

The day was capped off by an awards ceremony to women that had brought worldwide recognition to Uganda.
**Exemplary Families**

Unwavering family support is a source of confidence and courage for many people with and without disability – a strong support system usually found lacking in the lives of Women and Girls with Disabilities on account of gender and disability. However, in the communities of Swinga 2 settlement camps, the families of Ayikoru Jamillah and Tokara Alima have been nothing but sources of peace, security and empowerment for Women with Disabilities.

Jamillah is a 27 years old single mother of two children living with her parents and children in Umba village. Her family took her back after she separated from her husband and holds monthly meetings to encourage her inclusion in societal activities and participation in disability related trainings. Tokara is a mother of 7 children living with her In-laws. When her husband married a second wife, her Father-In-Law invited her to live with the family. This gave her the courage to stay with her in-laws despite the lack of support from her husband.

Their families have promoted disability awareness, societal and community inclusion of Women and Girls with Disabilities in community activities and supported their empowerment.

**A Sign of Social Responsibility**

“*It is an occasion to reflect on disability itself and the high levels of illiteracy in Persons with Disabilities Especially Women and Girls who bare the future generations of the world,*” were some of the remarks made by the state Minister for Defence, Mr. Bright Rwamirama at the Makerere University Business School Run. In its second year; the run drew the attention and cooperation of students with disabilities, media, Government representatives and a few organizations for persons with disabilities. The emergence of Girls with Disabilities in the top 3 positions was a feather in the cap for the school, NUWODU, and the theme of the run which aims to support Girls and Women with Disabilities attain higher education. For female students with disabilities to come out in the top 3 positions was a great show of female potential and strength.

The State Minister for Defense Mr. Bright Rwamirama mentioned that the annual Makerere University Business School run was a good sign of social responsibility, oneness and compassion to support where support is needed before bringing the successful event to a close.
Waged Employment for Skilled Persons with Disabilities

Skilled Persons with Disabilities witnessed a rise in their employability and value during the project launch of ‘increasing access to waged employment for Skilled Persons with Disabilities in Uganda’.

Before; uneducated and without skills, Persons with Disabilities were taken as burdens but with affirmative action and education for all in place, they are now empowered and have attained some level of their rights to education, access to services and therefore employment although minimum.

With Waged Employment for Persons with Disabilities; skilled persons with Disabilities have had their confidence and self-esteem boosted to better their chances of success during interviews and livelihood with the aim of employment and empowerment to become self-advocates.

The Merits of Engaging Disabled People’s Organizations

The first half of the year availed National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda prospects to participate in high level platform discourse for Humanitarian and building an inclusive Feminist movement on the many concerns of Women with Disabilities in Uganda.

NUWODU’s Youth Representative on the Board of Directors and staff member attended CREA’s re-Conference in Nepal where they shared NUWODU’s work in Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights for Girls and Women with Disabilities and networked with mainstream feminist organizations for mainstreaming of disability programs in their work.

At the United Nations Economic and Social Council’s Humanitarian Affairs Segment, the Chairperson Board of Directors – Ms. Achayo Rose Obol made a presentation on the importance of inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in humanitarian work, localization and value of partnerships. While at the Women Deliver Humanitarian Conference; she strengthened NUWODU’s relationships with fellow advocacy organizations around the world and had her capacity built as an advocate for the rights of Girls and Women with Disabilities.

Figure 5: Minister of State for Youth and Children Affairs, Ms. Florence Nakiwala giving a press interview after the launching the Waged Employment for Skilled Persons with Disabilities project

Figure 6: BOD Chairperson Ms. Rose Achayo at a panel discussion during the United Nations Economic and Social Council: Humanitarian Affairs Segment
A Society where Girls and Women with Disabilities Live Dignified Lives

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