

Mission of the Centre for Basic Research

To generate and disseminate knowledge by conducting basic and applied research of social, economic and political significance to Uganda in particular and Africa in general, so as to influence policy, raise consciousness and improve quality of life.

**Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in Uganda:
A String of Fragile Pearls**

Rapporteur: Samson Opolot

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Proceedings of a Workshop held to Discuss the Draft SIDA Consultancy Report on "Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in Uganda: A String of Fragile Pearls" on 20 October 1999 at the Uganda International Conference Centre, Kampala.

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Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in Uganda - A String of Fragile Pearls

Session One - Chairperson: Bishop Nelson Onono-Onweng

Bishop Onono-Onweng of the Northern Uganda Diocese of the Church of Uganda opened the workshop. He welcomed the participants and encouraged them to be open and frank when deliberating on the themes of peace, democracy and human rights in Uganda. According to him, these were very important issues in Uganda. He called upon Dr. Nyangabyaki Bazaara, Executive Director, Centre for Basic Research, to make his remarks on the SIDA/CBR collaboration.

Speech by Dr. Nyangabyaki Bazaara, CBR Executive Director, on the background to the SIDA/CBR collaboration

Dr. Bazaara welcomed guests and appreciated their tremendous response to the invitation to attend the workshop. He informed the delegates that the Centre for Basic Research (CBR) was located at Plot 15, Baskerville Avenue, in Kololo, Kampala. He described it as a non-profit organisation which was first registered as an educational trust in 1989, and was presently also registered with the National NGO Board. He noted that CBR's research agenda had expanded over time to include the following:

- Gender and work
- Informal sector
- Civil society, poverty and governance
- Land tenure
- Aids management
- War and environment
- Pastoralism, and
- The non-profit sector.

He observed that although CBR obtained funding from a wide range of sources, SIDA was commendable for offering a flexible core fund that enabled CBR to decide her own research agenda. The same fund had enabled CBR to grow into the institution that it was.

Coming back to the issues under deliberation, Dr. Bazaara noted that peace, democracy and human rights were very critical issues for debate considering Uganda's history marked by chaos and insecurity. He observed that

he had lived through this unenviable history as a student when at one time he was held up at Makerere University. He noted, however, that presently considerable peace had returned to most of the country, save for some parts of the Northern, North-Eastern and Western regions. He argued that this was not enough. All Ugandans needed peace, and what peace there was needed to be buttressed.

Dr. Bazaara viewed the yearning for peace as a human right that could only obtain under conditions of democratic governance. To him, it was the duty of all citizens to bridge the gap between these crucial aspects. He concluded by noting that democracy was about appreciating rules of the game and abiding by them.

Bishop Onono-Onweng thanked the Executive Director for his opening address and called upon the Swedish Ambassador to make his opening remarks.

Speech by the Ambassador of Sweden, Mr. Hans Anderson

The Swedish Ambassador extended greetings of the Swedish Government to Uganda. He noted that Sweden wished to strengthen and further her relationship with Uganda. As part of this process, he observed that Sweden had opened a fully-fledged embassy in Uganda that would be expanded and strengthened by the year 2000.

On the SIDA consultancy report under review, he observed that the Swedish delegation wished to learn from Ugandans what they considered important with regard to the issues of peace, democracy and human rights. He said the report was a background paper for a new collaboration between Sweden and Uganda and the seminar ought to polish it up, identify omissions, and make recommendations that would make an impact on future collaboration between the two countries. He concluded by calling upon all participants from civil society and the Uganda Government to effectively discuss the report.

Bishop Onono thanked the Swedish Ambassador for his encouraging words, and promised that the workshop would ensure the themes were fully discussed, especially in view of the impact they had on the Swedish/Uganda collaboration. Thereafter, he called upon one of the authors and consultancy team coordinator, Ms. Ase Ottosson, to introduce the draft report.

First Presentation: Ms. Ase Ottosson

Ms. Ase Ottosson began by appreciating the contribution of the research team and the various people in the country who had participated in the study. She particularly noted the contributions of Mr. Henrik Hammergren and Mr. John Ssenkumbwa.

She reiterated that the report was a benchmark for future Sweden-Uganda collaboration that sought to interrogate the nature of peace, democracy and human rights. The report intended to analyse the above issues in order to stimulate discussion on further Swedish collaboration with Uganda. Hence it was the responsibility of the discussants to operationalise the issues raised in the report. The discussion was intended to animate discussion and not to redeem an academic and descriptive report.

She also observed that the report was based on interviews and extensive review of national and international reports on the issues of peace, democracy and human rights. She concluded by calling upon participants to delve into the report deeply and highlight local priorities.

Bishop Onono thanked Ms. Ase Ottosson for the presentation and called upon the second presenter, Mr. John Ssenkumba, to make his contribution.

Second Presentation: Mr. John Ssenkumba

Mr. Ssenkumba noted with appreciation the big turn up for the workshop. This, to him, exemplified the interest Ugandans placed in the themes of the workshop.

On the content of the report, he observed that it could have been much bigger and more detailed if it had not been for the strict terms of reference set by SIDA. He, therefore, asked the participants to note that a lot of issues could have been left out by the report, and these should be raised by the discussants. He described the report's structure as thematic, dealing with democracy, peace and human rights.

Ssenkumba advised the participants that they should split into three groups to discuss the themes in much more detail. The decision to form thematic groups was taken to enable more insightful and objective analysis of the three areas of the report. He said he hoped the groups would be ideologically balanced to avoid what he described as a 'dialogue of the deaf'. To guide readers, he said all sections of the report ended with a summary that encapsulated the key arguments therein. He ended his presentation with the following key conclusions of the report:

- Political stability was fragile, as new forms of inequality had replaced old ones. To him the movement was drifting into a one-party system.
- Peace and security were equally unpredictable owing to a negative legacy of addressing conflict locally and within the Great Lakes region.
- The referendum might either consolidate or destroy the little achievements Uganda had obtained.

The above conclusions, therefore, led to the following questions:

- How do we create more political will for a freer society ?
- How do we define power and divide it to exercise the interests of the majority?
- What is the competence and legitimacy of the state and how does it remain effective and legitimate?
- How do we tame the state?
- How do we put obstacles to abuse of power when it is privatizing itself?

Mr. Ssenkumba guided participants into forming the three groups as follows:

1. Group One: Political Context of Democratisation and Rights (Moderator: Mr. Murindwa Rutanga).
2. Group Two: Constitutionalism and Rights (Moderator: Sarah Bageya - FIDA)
3. Group Three: Issues of Peace and Security (Moderators: James Odongo/Mark Ovola)

The group discussions started at noon and were permitted to discuss up to the lunch break. He suggested that each group selects a rapporteur, and reiterated the need for critical reflection by participants in their respective groups.

In his summing speech, Bishop Onono emphasised some of the key issues raised by the presenter. To begin with, he noted that the presenter had said the political foundation in Uganda was not only fragile but also delicately fragile. Secondly, the presenter had noted that Uganda's security situation was unpredictable, especially as a result of regional conflict. He, however, observed that the region in question was not well defined. The third issue he recapped from the presentation was the argument that the Ugandan state was not effective, legitimate and competent. He ended with the question: who will ensure that all these concerns go on well?

Group Reports - Chairperson: Dr. Jean John Barya

The chairperson opened the session by reminding participants that the main purpose was to discuss the group reports. He suggested that in order to save time all rapporteurs of the respective groups should present their

discussions before the plenary reacted to them. He called upon the presenter for Group One.

Group 1: Political Context and Democratization

The rapporteur for the group mentioned the areas that were focused upon that included the political context and democratization, and gendered politics respectively. The different discussion groups hence came up with the following positions:

1. Distribution of political power:

- The group noted the role of external actors (e.g. donors and NGOs) in defining Uganda's political process. Uganda was not isolated and donor conditionalities could not be ignored.
- A critical historical analysis of political processes in Uganda was lacking. The role of religious organizations in the political process and allocation of cabinet posts in particular had been ignored.
- The movement was conceived as a political organization/party that was monopolizing political space in the country.
- The NRM of today was not the same as that of the past in that today's was less inclusive and less responsive to demands of popular and other political actors in the country.
- The notion that the NRM was a temporary arrangement intended to transfer power to its opponents (pluralists, for example) was a political hoax.
- One of the things NRM shared with the old political parties was that it had no roots in the rural areas.
- However, some participants raised the question of whether Local Councils (LCs) were not NRM structures at the grassroots. The same opinion argued that the movement had been all-embracing and included all interests, including those of multi-partyists.
- The referendum had split Ugandan society between those who wanted to participate in it and those who wanted to boycott it.
- The NRM argument that elections based on individual merit were democratic was a fallacy because power could never destroy itself.
- There was strong need for checks and balances on the oligarchic state.
- The role of political parties had not been critically assessed in historical perspective.
- Government should desist from taking recourse to historical

fundamentalism by maligning political parties on the basis of the past. Rather, parties should be commended for having engaged in agrarian, labour and other economic struggles during their evolution.

2. *Gendered Politics:*

- More emphasis on gender as a cross-cutting issue was needed and the whole issue needed to be given more representation in the paper.
- Women's role in politics was misconceived to have emerged with the NRM yet it dated back to international events as such as the 1985 United Nations Conference in Nairobi.
- Women should strive to move beyond the parameters narrowly circumscribed by the state to achieve the 50:50 equal opportunities with their male counterparts.
- Women Members of Parliament (MPs) had tended towards elitism in their dealings with the NRM, which they idolize as their godfather. Members felt such MPs undermined the women's struggle for emancipation. In other words, the women's movement should not be reduced to being wholly attributed to the NRM programmes.

3. *General comments on the report:*

- The report was timid.
- The report contained inaccuracies and contradictions that needed to be corrected.
- The authors should cite their sources of information.
- It was inaccurate to state that Museveni fell out with Obote and went into exile in Tanzania.
- However, in spite the above weaknesses; the report was commended as a good basis for discussion.

Group 2: Constitutionalism and Rights

The group rapporteur, Dr. Bazaara, informed the meeting that his group had discussed constitutionalism and rights issues. He observed that the third area the group was meant to cover, on economic and social rights, could not be tackled because of time constraints.

He stated that the objective of the discussion had been to provide a critique and comments such that the report could be revised to become a good basis for Swedish-Uganda co-operation in the area of peace, human rights and

democracy. He observed that the group felt there should have been a plenary session where the above issues should have been presented first to allow for good discussion. Finally, on procedure, he noted that the group had discussed the report systematically section by section.

1. Comments on Constitutionalism:

- The authors were not clear on the rigging of the 1980 elections in spite of the available volume of evidence to this effect.
- Local Councils' operations were fused up, thus exhibiting formal and informal rules, and blending with other power structures such as elders.
- The Office of the Inspector General of Government (IGG) had changed a lot, yet the report did not take this into consideration. For example, the IGG already had several district branch offices in Arua, Fort Portal, Mbale, Mbarara and Soroti.
- It was also observed that some of the functions attributed to the IGG's office were outside its scope.
- The Uganda Human Rights Commission did not interpret constitutions! This aspect was outside its mandate.
- Was the argument that Human Rights Commissioners were demoted ministers relevant?
- The report stated that the Electoral Commission was not representative without stating how the authors thought it could be made more representative.
- On page 34, a number of statements lacked meaning. For example, how could a constitution violate freedoms? Political parties were products of concrete socioeconomic realities – democratisation was a process and not an end in itself.
- The argument that established bodies were not delivering on poverty was noted, but the group felt the problem might not be these bodies per se but the lack of resources and weaknesses within the law.
- Four years was too early to judge the 1995 Constitution.
- The 1995 Constitution provided a foundation for democracy.
- The group noted that corruption was not a state crime but one committed by individuals. Enforcement on corruption was weak because anti-corruption agencies lacked or had meagre resources to effectively combat it.
- It was noted that the report was silent on externally (donor) driven corruption.

- It was noted that whereas the circumcision of women was raised as a violation of human rights, nothing was said about the circumcision of men.
- It was noted that when we talked about children's rights and the need to listen to their voices, we ignored the rights of parents.
- The group felt that the report needed to anchor most of its analyses within the context of structural adjustment programme (SAP) austerity.

2. *On the Judiciary:*

- The group noted that the authors emphasised lack of skills but this might not be the case. The bigger issue could be poor or lack of remuneration, morals and self-esteem.
- It was important to note that the judiciary was still based on English law, and not on our local law, which also cause problems.
- It was misleading to say that the Executive always disrespected Court decisions without proper evidence.
- The figures cited for the Judiciary budget should be recast against the national budget for them to make sense.

3. *Comments on the report:*

- The group pointed out that the authors of the report needed to explain the methodology used, e.g. sources and sample.
- The presenter also noted that the report had a number of inaccuracies that needed to be revised. They recommended that the factual mistakes should be corrected before this report was taken on as a basis for the Uganda-Swedish collaboration.

Group 3: Security and Peace

The group rapporteur, Mr. Mark Avola, informed the meeting that his group had categorized their discussion into three areas: one aspect was on security, the second on regional issues and the third one on internal matters.

1. *Security and Peace*

The group questioned whether there was a contradiction between state and individual security. Was security about states or individuals? The members also decried the negative tendency among Ugandans to announce deaths

beginning with the word 'only' - for example, "only 8 people died". They observed that even a single person dead was bad enough.

They noted that attempts should be made to concentrate on political as opposed to military solutions to insecurity. Whereas a military solution may be mandated in the short term, in the long run, a political solution should be adopted.

2. Regional Conflicts

The group questioned the effects of conflicts and war in Uganda's neighbouring countries. In the Sudan, allegations of Ugandan support for the SPLA had led to the Sudan giving sanctuary to the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) rebels fighting the Uganda Government. These rebels had abducted over 12,000 innocent children. At the same time, Uganda was fighting in the Congo. It was also noted that the wars were very expensive. The Congo war was said to have grave military, economic and political implications for Uganda.

3. Internal Security

The group noted that poverty was a big contributor to conditions that created insecurity. One could not have peace under conditions of poverty. Poverty was said to arise from inequitable allocation of resources, whereby Kampala took every investment to the extent of people, including industrialists, building in swamps when other poorer areas such as Gulu had vast lands which were underdeveloped.

The group linked poverty to conflicts and internal insecurity. It was felt that the Amnesty Bill should be hastened in order to provide the framework for those indulging in rebel activities to get amnesty.

Plenary Discussions - Chairperson: Dr. John-Jean Barya

Dr. Barya thanked the three groups for the contributions made to improve the report. He called upon participants to make contributions to the plenary debate. He suggested that since the issues handled by groups 1 and 2 were related, these could be discussed together before tackling peace and security discussed by group 3. Emphasising that contributions be made as brief as possible in order to save time, he opened the debate.

Debate on Political Context, Democratization, Gendered Politics, Rights and Constitutionalism

Mr. Magode Ikuya reiterated that the contradictions and inconsistencies in the report must be addressed. He observed that one could not talk about corruption in isolation of donor dictates. He particularly noted that aid was often tied to the donors' products, e.g. purchase of Land Rovers if it was a British grant, expatriates, companies and contractors. To him, this was already a form of corruption introduced from the inception of the loan or grant. However, he said he did not understand why when Ugandans allocated themselves certain privileges then it was construed as corruption.

He argued that the Judiciary was so bureaucratic and wondered how it could be made more traditional/local in orientation for it to become more adaptable to local interests. By extension, he argued that Local Council courts were more realistic than the outlandish formal legal system. He concluded with the observation that the report was sentimental; and whereas it talked a lot about human rights, it ignored the issue of poverty in Uganda.

Mr. Nathan Byamukama observed that the Uganda Government was poor at reporting on developments in the implementation of international instruments. Therefore steps should be put in place to make the Government more accountable to the United Nations.

On the issue of the NRM being a temporary arrangement, he argued that this was never stated at all and was a misrepresentation of facts. In reference to the tendency to extol Miria Matembe or Winnie Byanyima as epitomes of the women's emancipation, he decried the mentality of eulogising a few individuals instead of the collective contribution to struggles.

Hon. Augustine Ruzindana pointed out that the report must have been written in a hurry given the inconsistencies and its negative mood *vis a vis* the NRM Government. He wondered why it was so biased against any achievements made in Uganda? He particularly decried generalisations like "the President, Minister and the Speaker violate the independence of the Judiciary," and "the 1995 Constitution violates freedoms of association" and said that specific evidence and examples be pointed out.

On the argument that there were only few women judges, he wondered why it was not appreciated within a historical context. "How many were they in the past before reaching the 14% mark?" he asked. He felt the Uganda Human Rights Commission was wrongly assessed, yet it had performed quite well and even produced reports of its activities to Parliament. On the Electoral Commission not being representative, he sought to know what representation was being alluded to: gender, political affiliations or something else? In his

opinion, the report should have focussed on the performance of the Electoral Commission, not on its composition.

In the same vein, he felt the IGG's office was poorly analysed considering its history and transformation. For example, how could it be stated that it was centralised when it already had branches in some district?. The issue of corruption was in his opinion improperly analysed. He observed that it was only the United States of America that outlawed corruption in foreign countries. However, the rest of the donor world permitted it in form of tax repatriations and commissions.

Dr. Rwanyarare advised participants to avoid the attitude that the paper was negative to the Ugandan Government and make objective criticism. He, however, concurred that there were a lot of inconsistencies on the dates, figures and some statements were obviously wrong. For example, he corrected the idea that Museveni separated with Obote and fled into exile, noting that they fled together into Tanzania.

He also disagreed with the notion that corruption could be justified by attributing it to donor influences as mentioned by some commentators earlier. In his opinion, it was right for donors to monitor how their funds were put to use because aid was a form of cooperation, hence the need for the local and foreign partners to work together through companies, experts and so on. He was critical of local politicians abusing their offices, and cited the case of Presidential Political Adviser, Major Kakooza Mutale's harassment of the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Masaka as an example.

In his opinion, the Movement was not exactly what it professed to be in the law. It was a political system and, indeed, a party. NRM, he argued, had tribalised politics in the name of balancing social forces. He also added that the NRM was falsifying Uganda's political history by blaming all ills on the history of party politics in Uganda.

Mr. Ssenkumba accepted that the report was written in a hurry which explained the numerous inconsistencies. He, however, was of the opinion that these were not reasons to derail the debate. He further pointed out the need to appreciate that criticism of the NRM was intended to strengthen and not to weaken it. The good things were not deliberately ignored, but weaknesses were brought out for emphasis. However, he pointed out that the authors would take care of the factual problems.

Ms. Ottoson concurred with Ssenkumba that the essence of the present debate was to improve the report by omissions and submissions. Therefore, the controversies were very healthy indeed.

Dr. Bazaara on his part questioned the notion that democracy was a western construction. In his opinion democracy could be consciously developed through agreed and sound principles that all abided with. In his opinion, the

Movement did not necessarily preclude pluralism and, indeed, the President had merely postponed multiparty politics to a future date.

Hon. Ruzindana pointed out the need to desist from the temptation of thinking of starting anew every time. Why, for instance, had the authors of the SIDA report ignored the numerous reports on issues of human rights, peace and democracy in Uganda. These were numerous in Government and in academic circles. He emphasised the need to anchor the analysis in secondary and factual data.

Dr. Barya noted that by nature of it being a consultancy report, it was bound to have certain emphases as opposed to others, particularly with regard to secondary sources. However, where facts had been distorted, these would have to be corrected, as opposed to interpretations that were more subjective.

Debate on Security and Peace

Dr. Rwanyarare opened the debate with the view that peace could be relative and not absolute. He posed a question: What are the causes and effects of peacelessness in certain areas? He said he supported the idea that the present peace in Uganda was fragile and precarious, and gave the recent throwing of bombs and car robberies in the city as examples.

He criticised the NRM for moving to solve problems violently and ignoring peaceful means. He wondered whether it was because they had acquired power through the gun. He recommended that more peaceful and sustainable measures of conflict resolution be used to resolve local and regional conflicts.

Mr. Don Rukaare noted that in spite of the regional and international dimensions of conflicts in the DRC and Sudan, the report did not touch the issue of international law and how it could be brought to bear of the problems in the Great Lakes. He posed the question: Why and what are the geopolitics?

Mr. Magode Ikuya observed that the opening sentence of the report was very negative and created a sense of despondency. He noted that it portrayed a picture of rape, a picture of Uganda assaulted by her neighbours, and that she could not protect her children. In any case, he wondered, why the international community had been so silent with regard to Uganda's woes. He informed the meeting that, both Sudan and Congo were the first to attack Uganda, and the latter had merely acted in response.

He further pointed out that the NRM was very accommodative of the opposition, notwithstanding the fact that some opposition parties such as the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) had gone ahead to make seditious statements on their website. Overall, he noted, the report seemed to emphasise war and

conflict in Uganda and ignored the peace and stability that abounded in most of the country.

Commissioner Adrian Sibbo of the Uganda Human Rights Commission, cautioned participants not to politicise the debate. He noted that in spite the coverage given to the issue of insecurity in the country, the insecurity of cattle rustling in Karamoja and neighbouring districts had been ignored. Also ignored were pockets of insecurity in western and eastern Uganda. He informed the meeting that whereas mention was made to the issue of the NRM imprisoning people in 'safe houses', no evidence was given. He said he had been following up the complaints about safe houses for a long time and was now sure that they were no more. Presently, most of the former safe houses were now registered as official detention places.

Mr. Chango Machyo felt that external factors in war and instability had been omitted. Why, for example, had structural adjustment been ignored? He took issue with the failure to locate the origin of instability in oppressive colonial structures. On the debate of whether to have the Movement or multiparties, he noted that so far much of the conception used was that the Movement was a political organisation, and the fact that it was a political system was not borne in mind. He noted that people should desist from the thinking that parties would just emerge through social engineering. He noted that it would take time for them to evolve into democratic forces.

On insecurity, he argued that it was not Ugandans causing it but our neighbours. Since independence, he noted, peace was not meant to be real. Rather the colonial structure left seeds of discord that had perennially fueled insecurity in the country - for example, popular leaders like Lumumba were killed and replaced with the military under Mobutu in Zaire, now Democratic Republic of Congo. In his opinion, the entire effect was to suppress African participatory democracy. Therefore, African countries had no peace but could attain what he called Low Intensity Conflict (LINC).

Chango Machyo blamed internal insecurity on the elite who formented conflicts in their respective areas. He cited the case of Teso where the key players were the elite in the defunct Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF), the Anti-Cattle Rustling Militia, the defunct Special Force and disgruntled politicians, but not the ordinary citizens. And once the Iteso discovered what the elite was doing to forment chaos, these elements were thrown out.

He noted that when talking about insecurity, one could not ignore poverty and aid. In his opinion, foreign aid rarely benefited the poor but was channelled into luxurious consumption among the elite, some of them from the donor countries themselves. His argument was that most of the aid money went back to the country of origin through such practices. Alluding to Sweden, for example, he argued that the Swedish Construction Company, Skanska, would always

benefit from Swedish Government-funded building projects. He concluded that aid was, indeed, a business for the rich countries.

Captain Shaban Bantariza, in his submission, advised that some of the gaps in the report resulted from neglecting government sources. He advised researchers against the negative attitude that they would be denied information in Government departments. He said if this happened, or if wrong facts were given, it should be stated in the report.

On security, he noted that Uganda had always been a victim of raids by neighbouring countries such as Sudan in 1994, and yet Uganda had not retaliated. He wondered why the Sudan had a persistent policy of destabilising Uganda. "What is the problem and how do we correct it," he asked.

Hon. Ruzindana noted that peace and security had been changing over time. In the early 1980s we had a phase of war followed by migrations and refugee influx in Uganda, but this was followed by peace-making. The second phase that was being witnessed was characterised by regional inter-state conflicts that would be followed by another phase of peace-making.

Dr. Barya in his capacity as Chair of the debate called it to an end and thanked participants for their incisive contributions. He called upon Ms. Norah Matovu Winyi to steer the meeting towards a wrap-up of the debate and, finally, invite the guest of honour to close the meeting.

Closing Session - Chairperson: Ms. Norah Matovu Winyi

Ms. Matovu briefly noted that the aim of the session was two-fold. The first task was to highlight the key comments of the workshop with regard to the report and, the second, to provide SIDA with the ways forward. This would be followed by the Guest of Honour's closing speech. She called upon participants to be brief and to the point in their submissions.

Dr. Barya submitted that to begin with all the highlighted inaccuracies and contradictions should be corrected. He advised the authors to refer to both the group presentations and the plenary for these comments. Secondly, he observed that being factual and accurate was very important for this report that would act as a basis for future SIDA-Uganda cooperation. Therefore, sources had to be included and appropriately quoted within accepted parameters.

Mr. Byamukama observed that SIDA should encourage more organisations to undertake critical research in Uganda. He particularly noted that from the deliberations of the workshop it would appear that Ugandans did not understand the Movement, and this called for more research in this direction. Furthermore, he argued, even Government departments should be funded to undertake research, particularly in those areas that would inform on Uganda's implementation of international instruments.

Commissioner Adrian Sibbo contended that the manner in which the authors analysed human rights in the report called for more consultations with Government and the Uganda Human Rights Commission. The emphasis in the report had been more towards the negative aspects.

Ms. Norah Matovu observed that perhaps the participants needed to be aware that the terms of reference could have limited the scope of the study and, therefore, the analysis the authors could provide. Therefore, it was not surprising that there were lots of gaps for SIDA to consider filling on the basis the contributions made in the workshop.

Dr. Bazaara reiterated the request that SIDA funds more research in Uganda. He underscored the fact that the struggle for human rights was a political process that would continuously change in Uganda. Therefore we should continuously analyse these changes and seek to direct them toward desired ends.

Mr. James Odong observed that researchers and the Government of Uganda should look at the rights of children more closely. This, he said, was even more pertinent for the war-torn areas in northern Uganda. He commended the role of UNICEF in trying to assist traumatized children that had been rescued from the LRA rebels; but there was need for more humanitarian assistance to arrest the situation. He called upon SIDA to consider directing its support to the children in war-torn areas through World Vision and other NGOs in such areas. Another area SIDA could support, according to him, was the dissemination of the Children's Statute.

He corrected the information in the report that there were 425 trained Care-Givers in Gulu, noting that the number of Care Givers has risen to 523. In his opinion, gender should be treated as a cross-cutting issue instead of merely appending it as a small section of the report. Finally, he recommended that SIDA should identify media organisations the respective regions, and collaborate with them to improve peace, human rights and democracy in Uganda.

Bishop Onono-Onweng requested SIDA to consider the role of religious institutions in development interventions. He noted the Church had diverse civil organisations that could act as vehicles in SIDA's promotion of development.

Mr. Rolf Eriksson, on behalf of SIDA, stated that they were happy that the report had stimulated debate and offered the participants food for thought. He informed the meeting that this report was part of a series that should form the Swedish Country Strategy processes, and was particularly meant for SIDA to draw conclusions from. He mentioned that other activities to define the Sweden-Uganda Government collaboration were taking place, such as meetings with Government departments on the one hand, and civil society on the other. From these meetings, he noted, a lot of cross-cutting issues kept emerging on areas like the role of the church, civil society and gender emancipation in development. In

most cases, there was consensus that poverty, peace, human rights and democracy were the priority areas that should be focused on. He concluded by thanking the Centre for Basic Research and the authors of the report for their effort.

Mr. Ewa Westman also from SIDA observed that the study would provide a rich background for future long-term cooperation. She commended the critical comments, and emphasized the need for the authors to revise their report accordingly. She said although she did not agree entirely with the argument that the Uganda Human Rights Commission was negatively assessed by the report, she accepted the recommendation that their reports needed to be consulted when revising the document.

On this note, the Chairperson, Ms. Norah Matovu, called upon Commissioner Aliro-Omara to make the closing speech on behalf of the Chairperson, Uganda Human Rights Commission, Mrs. Margaret Sekaggya.

**Closing Speech - Mr. J. M. Aliro-Omara, Commissioner,
Uganda Human Rights Commission**

Your Excellency, Mr. Hans Anderson
The Director CBR, Dr. Bazaara
The Consultant Team that compiled the report
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Introduction

It is a pleasure for me to close this seminar on 'Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in Uganda.' I trust that you have had fruitful deliberations that will help produce an objective report and recommendations.

I must thank SIDA for its continued interest in the sociopolitical and economic affairs of Uganda. At the Uganda Human Rights Commission, we can never hide our sincere gratitude to SIDA for its generous contribution towards the promotion and protection of human rights in Uganda. I also want to appreciate the work done by the Centre for Basic Research (CBR) in contributing to knowledge; and also acknowledge the fact that the Uganda Human Rights Commission has benefited from your publications. At the UHRC, research in human rights is one of our major functions and, therefore, we are always keen to explore more avenues for collaboration and co-operation in research by working together with organizations such as CBR.

Importance of Research

I do not want to overemphasise the importance of research. That you know better. I would like to emphasise, however, that objectivity is central in research. In situations where the people want information, a subjective perspective only spreads ignorance rather than knowledge, and may, in some instances, lead to negative results. This is why research findings have to be discussed and tested before they are eventually presented for the consumption of the people. This is why I support this seminar organised to discuss the draft report of the findings of this study on human rights, democracy and peace in Uganda. I expect that the opinions offered during this seminar will be given due attention in the final report.

The study on peace, democracy and human rights was most opportune and timely. These are issues, which are most current in Uganda. Peace has continued to elude parts of Uganda while democracy and human rights are current issues of debate in Uganda.

Human Rights

The concept of human rights in and its application in country is far from being universally acceptable. The existence of the UHRC and human rights NGOs has not managed to ensure this universality. It is noticeable that there is even disagreement in this country about what is a human right or what is not a human right. Thus, for example, many of our people do not appreciate the reasons why a suspect should not be harassed, beaten or humiliated. In the same vein, many people contest the wisdom of charging a suspect in court within the period allowed by law. Our cultures still challenge a number of human rights principles in spite of the constitutional provisions. Another example are the current debates about what democracy is, etc.

The Right to Peace

I have noted what the draft says about the problem of peace in Uganda. It has eluded sections of northern and western Uganda. In addition, lawlessness has disrupted peace in the Karamoja region. I want to point out that peace is a human right that must be enjoyed by all. The responsibility to provide peace lies with the Government. Citizens, however, must assist the Government in this endeavour. Government must, therefore, ensure that the current peace prevailing in northern Uganda and in Kasese and Kabarole should continue.

Peace and democracy are inter-linked. Irrespective of how one looks at it, both need each other. You need peace to practise democracy. Lack of democracy,

on the other hand, can lead to violent conflict, hence denying the people the right to peace. It is important, therefore, that we should not emphasise one at the expense of the other. We should not cite the existence of peace as an excuse for the denial of democratic rights. Nor should we disrupt peace on the argument that it is necessary for the attainment of democracy. I am happy that the draft report went a long way to address the inter-connectedness of human rights by considering all their political, civil, economic, social and cultural aspects.

The promotion of human rights in Uganda can be supported by more research. I know you must have grappled with the question of whether or not the restriction on the activities of political parties and the holding of a referendum on political systems is a violation of human rights. There are two sides to this debate. It is the role of researchers to clarify these positions for our politicians and the general public. It is not just enough to say it is (or it is not) a violation of the human rights without proper explanation. Our people need to know what the debate is all about for them to be able to contribute to it and come to a decision.

People need proper direction and guidance as they struggle to build and direct their own destiny. The intelligentsia must help society to think for itself not the intelligentsia to think for society, especially in the politics of the country. Research should be geared towards people's empowerment. I would appreciate research that suggests alternatives to existing weaknesses in society in order to eliminate the weakness. Research results that empower people economically, politically, socially promote human rights.

Democracy

The achievement of democracy has always been through struggles. It is, however, a struggle and process that had never ended. Even in the so-called democratic countries, the struggle has never ended as demands have always constantly been made for improvements by the addition of fresh ideas or removal of old practices. What is important in these countries is that the political atmosphere is present for democracy to grow. In Uganda, I believe that to a large extent that atmosphere is present for democracy to grow. I am not oblivious of the fact that political activities by parties are restricted, and the referendum on the issue is controversial. What I am saying is that there is the opportunity for those seeking improvement on the practice of democracy in this country to freely struggle for them. In a democracy, however, it is important that the majority equally listen to logic and common sense. It is only then that democracy becomes workable, and acts as a means of resolving political conflicts.

Conclusion

Peace and democracy, as I said, are important for us to enjoy human rights. As Ugandans we must strive to achieve peace and acceptable democracy. We must acknowledge the achievements so far made in these areas, but must never be content with the status quo. In my view, our present practice of democracy needs re-examination because a sizeable section of the population is dissatisfied with it. We must also strive to maintain peace, and avoid violent conflicts as a means to political power. The quest for political power through the gun has been responsible for the lack of peace and the misery of the people in the northern and western parts of Uganda. We must seek solutions to these conflicts, and government must be seen to lead the way. In this connection, the Commission welcomes the Amnesty Bill which, it hopes, will be passed by Parliament soon.

I am happy the draft report was able to address issues of peace, democracy and human rights in the country. I hope it will go a long way to help Ugandans understand the issues and, therefore, successfully deal with the problems that negate peace, democracy, and human rights in Uganda.

I want, finally, to thank CBR and SIDA for the good work done. I also wish to formally close the seminar.

List of Participants

	Name	Address
1.	Samson James Opolot	Centre for Basic Research P.O Box 9863, Kampala
2.	Dr. Nyangabyaki Bazaara	Centre for Basic Research P.O Box 9863, Kampala
3.	George Alele	OMPACT/UTV P.O Box 40188, Kampala
4.	Rev. Nelson Onono-Onweng	Diocese of Northern Uganda Bishop's Office P.O Box 232, Gulu
5.	David Turyatemba	Top Radio P.O Box 24609, Kampala Tel: 250685
6.	Mark Avola	World Vision Uganda P.O Box 5319, Kampala
7.	Rebecca Lukwago	Luweero Diocese Luweero District P.O Box 125, Luwero
8.	Anna Okwany	Apac District Local Government P.O Box 1, Apac
9.	Rolf Eriksson	Swedish Embassy, Kampala
10.	Henry Muganga	Uganda Television P.O Box 4260, Kampala
11.	Henry Ssebuliba	Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo
12.	Murindwa Rutanga	Centre for Basic Research P.O Box 9863, Kampala
13.	John Ssenkumba	Centre for Basic Research P.O Box 9863, Kampala
14.	James Odongo	World Vision Uganda P.O Box 5319, Kampala
15.	Jacqueline Asiimwe	Action for Development - ACFODE P.O Box 16729, Kampala
16.	Anderen	Embassy of Sweden
17.	Sarah Banenya	FIDA (U)
18.	Mrigitta Lot	Sida, Stockholm
19.	Ewa Westman	Sida, Stockholm
20.	Henrik Hammergen	Swedish Embassy - Nairobi

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|-----|------------------------|---|
| 21. | Peter Ntimba | WBS Television |
| 22. | Kiwit | WBS Television |
| 23. | Donald Rukare | IGG's Office |
| 24. | Lena Schildt | Sida, Stockholm |
| 25. | A. Nelson Kadropany | Voice of Life |
| 26. | Harriet Mugerwa | National Council of Children |
| 27. | Moses Omiat | Soroti District Association of
NGOs/CBOs
NETWORK - SODANN,
P.O Box 240, Soroti |
| 28. | Norah Matovu Winyi | HURINET (U) |
| 29. | A. M. Sibbo | UHRC |
| 30. | O.O. Wandera | <i>Monitor</i> Photographer |
| 31. | Chango Machyo | |
| 32. | Aloysius Kigongo | Centre for Basic Research
P.O Box 9863, Kampala |
| 33. | Abdul Karim Ddembe | <i>Njuba Times</i>
P.O Box 1880, Kampala |
| 34. | Dr. J. Rwanyarare J. | U.P.C
Uganda House, P.O Box 162, Kampala |
| 35. | James Magode Ikuya | Movement Secretariat,
P.O Box 7006, Kampala |
| 36. | Capt. Shaban Bantariza | <i>Tarehe Sita</i>
P.O Box 5152, Kampala |
| 37. | Angela Nakafeero | Forum for Women in Democracy
(FOWODE)
P.O Box 7178, Kampala , Tel: 342130 |
| 38. | Nathan Byamukama | Uganda Human Rights Commission
(UHRC) |
| 39. | Jessica Badebye | Radio Uganda |
| 40. | Helen Apolot | Star FM |
| 41. | Diana Ddumba | Radio Uganda |
| 42. | Lt. Okei-Rukogota | <i>Tarehe Sita</i> |
| 43. | Allan Tatyama | <i>New Vision</i> |
| 44. | M. Wambedde | Uganda Youth Forum |
| 45. | E. Mugisha | Human Rights Concern |
| 46. | Lilian Kyeyune | Radio Simba/ Journalist
Tel: 543672 |
| 47. | Dr. John-Jean Barya | Centre for Basic Research
P.O Box 9863, Kampala |
| 48. | Joel Masembe | WID, P.O Box 31159, Kampala |

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| 49. | Hon. Augustine Ruzindana | Kampala |
| 50. | Ase Ottosson | Swedish Embassy |
| 51. | Rene Mwanze | |

Group 1

Theme: Political Context

1. John Ssenkumba
2. James Rwanyarare
3. Nathan Byamukama
4. Murindwa Rutanga - Chairperson
5. Wilson Okaka - Rapporteur
6. Jacqueline Asimwe
7. Moses Eyaa
8. Wambedde M. Mbulambago
9. Llianne Kyeyune
10. Abdul Karim Ddembe
11. James Magode Ikuya
12. Angela Nakafeero
13. Lena Schildt
14. Samson James Opolot

Group 2

Theme: Consitutionalism and Rights

1. Sarah Banenya - Chairperson
2. Dr. Bazaara Nyangabyaki - Rapporteur
3. Ase Ottosson
4. Chango Machyo
5. Rebecca Lukwago
6. Lof Mrigitta
7. Mugisha Samuel

Group 3

Theme: Peace And Security

1. Rolf Eriksson
2. Ewa Westman
3. Bishop Nelson Onono-Onweng
4. Henrik Hammergen
5. James Odong - Chairperson
6. Mark Avola - Rapporteur
7. Capt. Shaban Bantariza
8. Okei Rukogota
9. Rene Mwanze
10. Henry Sebuliba

SIDA Consultancy Workshop

Wednesday, October 20, 1999

Venue: International Conference Centre - Press Conference Room

Programme

Wednesday, 20 October

08.30 a.m

REGISTRATION

SESSION ONE

09.00am Opening : Chair: Dr. J. J. Barya

09.05 - 9.15 am Dr. Bazaara : **Background to the SIDA/CBR
collaboration**

9.15 - 09.20 am **Ambassador Hans Anderson**

9.20 - 9.40 a.m **First Presenter:** Ase Ottosson

9.40 - 10.00 a.m **Second Presenter:** John Senkumba

10.00 - 10.20 a.m *TEA BREAK*

SESSION TWO

10.20- 10.40 a.m **Discussions**
Group 1: Political context of Democratisation
and Rights

Moderator: Murindwa Rutanga

	Group 2:	Constitutionalism and Rights
	Moderator:	FIDA (Sarah Banenya)
	Group 3:	Issues of Peace & Security
	Moderator:	(James Odong/Mark Avola)
12.00 - 1.00 p.m	Group Reports: Each 15 minutes	
1.00 - 2.00 p.m	LUNCH BREAK	
SESSION THREE		
2.00 - 3.30 p.m	Plenary discussions	
	Chair:	Dr. John-Jean Barya
3.30 - 4.30 p.m	Pointers to the Way Forward	
	Chair:	Rolf Eriksson
4.30 - 5.00 p.m	Closing	
	Chairperson	Uganda Human Rights
5.10 - 6.00 p.m	Cocktail	

CBR WORKSHOP REPORTS

1. **Pastoralism, Crisis and Transformation in Karamoja**; Report of a Workshop Organised by CBR and held at the Faculty of Science Makerere University, August 14 - 15, 1992, by Joe Oloka-Onyango, Zie Gariyo and Frank Muhereza; 26p.
2. **Women and Work: Historical Trends**; Report of a Workshop Organised by CBR, and held at the Faculty of Science, Makerere University, September 7-10, 1992, by Expedit Ddungu, James Opyene and Sallie Kayunga; 61p.
3. **Workers' Education**; Report of a CBR Workshop held at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Makerere University, March 19-20, 1993, John Jean Barya, Sallie Simba Kayunga and Ernest Okello-Ogwang; 47p.
4. **Pastoralism and Crisis in Karamoja**; Report of the Second CBR Pastoralism Workshop held at St. Phillips community Centre, Moroto, January 28-29 1994, by Frank Emmanuel Muhereza and Charles Emunyu Ocan; 19p.
5. **Regional, Workshop on Public Interest Environment Law and Community-Based Initiatives for Sustainable Natural Resources Management in East Africa** held at Colline Hotel Mukono, in August, 1996 by Samson Opolot and James Opyene; 37p.
6. Report of a Workshop Organised by CBR on "**A Dialogue on Gender Dimensions of Agricultural Policy in Uganda**" held at Fairway Hotel Kampala, May 3-4, 1996, by Samson James Opolot and John Ssenkumba; 58p.
7. **Report on the Proceedings of the NOTU/CBR Seminar: Worker' Social Conditions in Uganda Today** held at held at Pope Paul VI Memorial Community Centre on 22-23 July 1997, by John Ssenkumba and Crispin Kintu; 27p.
8. **Report of the ENRECCA Workshop on "Modernity, Development and Institutional Change: A Dialogue Towards the Next Millennium"** held at Lake View Hotel Mbarara, 21 – 28 February 1998, Charity Kyomugisha; 38p.
9. Report of the **Workshop on the Survey: "Constitutionalism Project Phase Three"** held at Colline Hotel Mukono, 29-30 January 1996, by John Ssenkumba; 22p.
10. **Lessons of Constitution-Making in Uganda** by Samson James Opolot and Chrispin Kintu Nyago; 29-30 January 1996. 52p.
11. **Report on A One-Day Dissemination Workshop on the Study "Civil Society, Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Review Essay** by Bazaara Nyagabyaki and Kintu Nyago Held at Centre for Basic Research on 2 September 1999, 21p.
12. **Peace, Democracy and the Human Rights in Uganda: A String of Fragile Pearls**; held at the Conference Centre, Kampala, on 20th October 1999, by Samson Opolot. 31p.