

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also referred to as the 2030 Agenda are a set of 17 aspirational goals elaborated through 169 targets and 232 indicators. The UN member states are expected to use SDGs to frame their agenda and political policies over the 15 years from January, 2016 to December, 2030. The SDGs form a cohesive and integrated package of global aspirations the world committed to achieve building on the accomplishments of their predecessors the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 2030 Agenda seeks to drive the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development through five pillars namely: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

During the United Nations General Assembly in New York, September 2015, the Government of Uganda was among the UN Member States that adopted the comprehensive, far reaching and people centered set of universal and transformative goals and targets. The declaration gave states the primary responsibility to follow up and review, at the national, regional and global levels, the progress made in implementing the goals and targets over the fifteen years of the Agenda.

The preparation of Uganda's NDPII (2015/16-2019/20) coincided with the inter-governmental negotiations on the SDGs in 2015. This gave the Government of Uganda an opportunity to try and integrate the SDGs framework into its national plan, accelerate national efforts towards achieving a middle income status, while pursuing sustainable and inclusive development within the framework of the Uganda Vision 2040 and the second National Development (NDP II). Accordingly, Uganda was among the 22 countries that volunteered to conduct a National status review under the auspices of the first High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2016, to establish the country's readiness.

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is charged with the responsibility of creating an enabling environment conducive to the implementation of SDGs. SDGs activities are guided by the established SDGs Coordination Framework, 2017 and SDGs roadmap, 2018.

The objective of this audit was to assess the preparedness by the Government of Uganda to implement the 2030 Agenda.

## KEY AUDIT FINDINGS

The Government of Uganda (GoU) through the OPM has made strides in preparing the country for the implementation of SDGs. The government formulated the SDGs Coordination Framework in 2017 and launched the SDGs roadmap in 2018. As required by the SDGs Coordination Framework, the key institutional Technical Working Groups namely: the Planning, Data, Finance, Communication and advocacy, Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation and reporting that should steer the SDGs function have been established and operationalised. However, this audit has identified key bottlenecks that still impede the full operationalisation of the SDGs activities as envisaged under the SDGs Coordination Framework as outlined below;

### 1. Integration of SDGs into National Context

Uganda committed to take ownership and establish national frameworks for the implementation and achievement of the 17 SDGs. National Planning Authority (NPA) was expected to guide the review process for identification of applicable goals and targets, and how they were to be reflected in Uganda's development policies, strategies, and planning processes to identify areas for improvement. By the time of audit, June 2018, the NPA had not undertaken a review of the national policies and frameworks with respect to SDGs to identify gaps and develop an action plan to address them.

There were no targeted reviews done to assess how the existing Comprehensive National Development Planning Framework (CNDPF), National Policy for Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation (NPPSME), GAPR, and the Results Reporting Framework (RRF) accommodated the elements of SDGs.

## **2. Alignment of Policies, Budgets and Programmes to SDGs**

NPA undertook a preliminary assessment that put the level of NDPII alignment to the global targets of the SDGs at 69% (strategic level). However the road map developed was not clear on when and how the remaining 31% will be incorporated into the National development framework. It was also observed that NPA had not mapped and communicated the applicable targets and indicators for each sector, Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Local Governments (LGs), private partners and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). In addition, guidelines for mainstreaming SDGs into sectors, MDAs and Local government plans had not been developed. Without a framework for mainstreaming SDGs, assessment of alignment of sectors, MDAs and LGs to SDGs will present challenges.

## **3. Policy integration and coordination**

Technical Working Groups (TWGs) are not functioning as envisaged in the SDG coordination framework. The committees and TWGs were not fully constituted; there was no record of quarterly meetings and progress reports. None of the TWG had appointed its full membership, and assigned responsibilities to the various parties in the TWG.

## **4. Creating ownership and engaging stakeholders in integrating the SDGs into the national context**

Overall, the level of public awareness on SDGs in the country remained low as reflected in responses obtained through interviews conducted by the audit team in selected MDAs and LGs. There were no specific SDG outreaches organised to engage and get views of various stakeholders at regional and local government levels for consideration in the preparation process. Whereas the TWG on communication and advocacy had developed a communication framework for SDGs, it was yet to develop the communication and advocacy strategy. The Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology (MoICT&NG) with support from UNDP had translated SDGs awareness messages into 10 local languages in form of brochures. However, the communication and advocacy TWG did not provide evidence of having disseminated them to sectors, MDAs, LGs and communities as intended.

## **5. Mobilizing resources and capacities for implementing the 2030 Agenda**

The Finance TWG led by Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) was expected to use the identified national programs and applicable targets for Uganda to assess the resources needed in terms of financing and capacity development to deliver the 2030 Agenda. This was to include reviewing and enhancing the existing arrangements for mobilizing resources, knowledge sharing, technology and partnerships for implementing the 2030 Agenda in Uganda. It was observed that MoFPED was in the process of developing a domestic revenue mobilization strategy for Uganda with the aim of raising tax-to-GDP ratio from 14% to 16% by 2019/20 in line with the set target under the NDPII and medium-term Sustainable National Development Plan. However the delay by NPA in identification and integration of all SDG targets into the national development plans presents a risk that the current revenue mobilisation efforts may not fully address the needs of the 2030 Agenda. It was also observed that TWGs had not been facilitated to implement their planned activities.

## 6. Monitoring, follow-up, review and reporting on progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda required monitoring, follow up, review and reporting processes for SDGs to be a primary responsibility of every government. This required determination of applicable indicators, establish baseline data, and review and update the M&E frameworks to facilitate effective tracking of SDG implementation. The assessment conducted by Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) for data in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division revealed that only 202 out of 230 global indicators were applicable to Uganda and the TWG had nationalized the applicable indicators and incorporated the Levels I, II and III indicators into the updated NSI framework. However, UBOS was yet to establish comprehensive baseline data on all applicable targets that would be used to track progress for SDGs implementation. In addition the data gap analysis of indicators for SDGs at program/service delivery points had not taken place. Although the National Statistical System (NSS) has the capacity to cover all the 202 indicators, the current modules used can only produce data for 85 indicators, of which data on 45 indicators was fully available while for the remaining 40, data could be obtained by UBOS with additional resources.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. NPA should prioritise the review of policies, strategies and processes for effective integration of SDGs. The OPM should undertake regular follow up of activities allocated to TWGs to ensure that all responsibilities assigned to TWG's are timely executed and reported on.
2. The OPM and NPA should fast track the review and update of the enabling tools and instruments for effective implementation of SDGs. The process of agreeing and mapping applicable targets and indicators to sectors, MDAs and LGs should be expedited.
3. The oversight role of parliament should be enhanced through sensitisation and revision of existing checklists to include SDG compliance. NPA should conduct the assessment of technical capacity of planners at the different planning levels, identify the gaps and strengthen capacity to facilitate integrated and multi-sectoral development planning for SDGs.
4. The OPM should ensure full operationalisation of the SDGs coordination framework by ensuring full constitution of all TWGs, and quarterly progress meetings are held at all levels, reports prepared and reviewed by the respective organs.
5. The MoICT&NG should fast track the full constitution and operationalisation of the communication and advocacy TWG.

### OVERALL AUDIT CONCLUSION

Whereas the GoU committed itself to implement SDGs Agenda 2030 over the next 15 years from 2016 to 2030, formulated the SDGs Coordination framework and launched the SDGs roadmap in 2018, the existing gaps in the operationalisation of the SDGs framework pose challenges in creating a suitable environment for their implementation. To ensure the realisation of the expected benefits of Agenda 2030, it is important that a comprehensive and supportive SDGs coordination framework and roadmap are fully operationalised and streamlined and the necessary capacities provided to all the TWGs, MDAs and LGs to allow them effectively implement their assigned roles and responsibilities.