

STAND FOR HER LAND

HER RIGHTS. HER LAND. A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL.

WHO WILL STAND FOR HER LAND?



**A Review of Uganda's 2026 Presidential Candidates'
Commitments on Women's Land Rights**



Who Will Stand For Her Land? A Review of Uganda's 2026 Presidential Candidates' Commitments on Women's Land Rights
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Disclaimer

This report is produced for informational and analytical purposes only. It examines the treatment of women's land rights within presidential election manifestos in Uganda, with the sole aim of contributing to policy and advocacy discussions on gender equity and land governance in Uganda. The report does not constitute, and should not be construed as, political campaigning, endorsement, or opposition to any candidate, party, or electoral platform. All references to political documents are made strictly for analytical purposes, and the views expressed herein are those of the authors in their professional capacity. They do not represent the views of UCOBAC and the S4HL Campaign, their funders, affiliates or any partner organizations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uganda's 2026 presidential election presents a critical opportunity to advance women's land rights (WLRs), a cornerstone for gender equality, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. Despite progressive legal frameworks, women continue to face systemic barriers to land ownership and control, driven by entrenched cultural norms, weak institutional capacity, low legal literacy, limited access to justice, and fragmented grassroots voice. The Stand for Her Land (S4HL) campaign Uganda identifies these as five priority areas for action.

This analysis reviews the manifestos of four major presidential candidates, namely: National Resistance Movement (NRM), the Alliance for National Transformation (ANT), National Unity Platform (NUP), and the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) to assess their alignment with S4HL priorities. The analysis reveals stark differences in commitment and specificity as summarised below:

NRM acknowledges harmful cultural norms and pledges mass land titling, improved access to justice through Local Council Courts and ADR, and public awareness campaigns. However, it lacks explicit financing, accountability measures, and strategies to amplify women's voice in governance.

ANT frames land as "life, culture, and livelihood" and promises tenure security, justice for vulnerable groups, and gender-responsive budgeting. Yet, its commitments remain broad and rhetorical, with no actionable measures for WLRs.

NUP offers a reform-oriented agenda focused on stopping land grabbing, securing customary rights, and modernizing land registration through blockchain. While it emphasizes community education and protection for land defenders, it fails to address patriarchal norms or guarantee women's participation in governance.

FDC stands out for explicit pledges to enforce laws protecting women's land ownership and inheritance rights, ensure women's participation in land governance, and establish special desks for vulnerable women. It also promises massive sensitization against harmful cultural practices and institutional capacity building. However, financing and accountability gaps persist.

The key findings of the report are that FDC demonstrates the strongest alignment with S4HL priorities, followed by NRM. NUP and ANT remain largely broader in their commitments. Unfortunately, none of the manifestos adequately address financing or accountability for WLRs, which reveals a critical advocacy gap.

Based on the five S4HL Uganda priority areas, the report makes the following recommendations for political parties and their presidential candidates so as to embed clear, actionable commitments on women's land rights within their manifestos.

First, they must prioritize the transformation of social norms by strengthening legal enforcement and investing in community education that challenges harmful practices. This ensures that laws protecting women's land rights are not only passed but also upheld in everyday life.

Second, financing must be explicitly addressed. Political parties in Uganda and their presidential candidates should commit to gender-responsive budgeting and allocate sufficient resources to land governance reforms. Without dedicated funding, promises remain symbolic rather than transformative.

Third, enhancing legal literacy is essential. Political parties should pledge nationwide awareness campaigns that inform women of their rights and available remedies. Such efforts empower women to claim and defend their land rights while shifting public attitudes toward equity.

Fourth, guaranteeing access to land justice requires investment in gender-sensitive dispute resolution mechanisms and affordable legal aid. This would enable women, especially those in rural and marginalized communities, to navigate justice systems without prohibitive costs or discriminatory barriers.

Finally, amplifying women's voices in governance must be a central commitment. Parties and candidates should establish mechanisms that secure women's effective representation in land governance structures. Ensuring women's participation in decision-making is critical to dismantling entrenched inequalities and shaping inclusive reforms.

Taken together, these recommendations offer a roadmap for political parties and presidential candidates to embed meaningful, gender-responsive land governance commitments in their manifestos.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background

In 2005, following a national referendum, Uganda reintroduced multiparty democracy after more than two decades of a single-party 'Movement' system.¹ Ideally, political parties emerge to reflect the broad spectrum of public views, interests, and needs.² However, in electoral democracies, parties often align with two overarching approaches: one favoring stability and preservation of the *status quo*, and the other advocating for reforms or even radical changes.³

A key feature of multiparty democracy is its emphasis on parties' policy programs as the basis for campaigns to influence voter choices and, ultimately, government policy.⁴ In principle, parties contest elections by rallying behind a manifesto that outlines their policy priorities and leadership team, which, upon assuming office, will implement these programs.⁵ Beyond stating issues and positions, manifestos also provide policy forecasts, indicating what the party claims it will deliver if elected.⁶

Among the critical policy issues that have gained traction in Uganda over the past three decades is the question of women's land rights. In the past, efforts have been made to politicize this issue to attract the attention of political actors. For instance, during the 2000 referendum on the country's political system, women's rights activists, aware of the government's vested interest in the electoral outcome, strategically threatened to boycott the referendum.⁷ They mobilized rural women to do the same unless their concerns, particularly regarding co-ownership of land, were addressed.⁸ While significant progress has been achieved in establishing supportive policy and legal frameworks for women's land rights over the years, implementation challenges persist.⁹ Gendered disparities in access, ownership, and control of land remain,¹⁰ prompting civil society actors to roll out initiatives aimed at elevating women's land rights as a national policy concern.

In 2019, the global *Stand for Her Land* (S4HL) campaign was conceptualized to address persistent gaps in realizing women's land rights in eight countries, namely: Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda.¹¹ In Uganda, the campaign was launched in August 2022 and identified five key barriers hindering women's full enjoyment of land rights.¹²

- 1 Yusuf Kiranda and Mathias Kamp, *Reality Check: The State of Multiparty Democracy in Uganda* (Kampala: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2010), 17.
- 2 "The Multiparty System: Essential Principles," *Democracy Web*, Albert Shanker Institute, accessed October 27, 2025, <https://www.democracyweb.org/study-guide/multiparty-system/essential-principles>
- 3 John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Dover Thrift Editions (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2002).
- 4 Nikolaus Eder, Marcelo Jenny, and Wolfgang C. Müller, "Manifesto Functions: How Party Candidates View and Use Their Party's Central Policy Document," *Electoral Studies* 45, no. 1 (February 2017): 75–87, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2016.11.011>.
- 5 *ibid*
- 6 Michael Laver and John Garry, "Estimating Policy Positions from Political Texts," *American Journal of Political Science* 44, no. 3 (July 2000): 619–634.
- 7 Jacqueline Asimwe, "Making Women's Land Rights a Reality in Uganda: Advocacy for Co-Ownership by Spouses," *Yale Human Rights and Development Journal* 4, no. 1 (2001): Article 8, <https://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/yhrdlj/vol4/iss1/8>.
- 8 Jennifer Bakyaawa, *Women Threaten to Vote Against Movement Over Land*, THE MONITOR, Feb. 22, 2000
- 9 Kamusiime, Herbert. 2022. *Implementation Gaps in Women's Land Rights in Uganda*. Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children's Welfare (UCOBAC) under the Stand for Her Land Campaign.
- 10 FAO. 2018. *Gender Gaps in Women's Land Rights*. Rome: FAO.
- 11 Stand for Her Land Campaign. 2019. "Presenting 'Stand For Her Land': A Global Advocacy Campaign on Women's Land Rights." World Bank Land and Poverty Conference, Washington, D.C., March 25, 3:00 p.m. EDT
- 12 UCOBAC, *Stand for Her Land Campaign Strategy 2022–2026*, Kampala: UCOBAC, 2022, <https://www.landcoalition.org/en/resources/stand-for-her-land-campaign-strategy-uganda/>.

- 1) Entrenched social norms and cultural practices restricting women's access, ownership, and control of land;
- 2) Insufficient funding and limited institutional capacity within land management and administration systems to support gender-responsive land governance;
- 3) Low levels of awareness among rights holders, duty bearers, and communities regarding legal and policy frameworks protecting women's land rights;
- 4) Limited access to justice for women in land-related disputes; and
- 5) Weak collective voice and fragmented agency of grassroots women in land governance processes



Hon Persis Namuganza, the Minister of State for Housing, launches the S4HL campaign in Uganda in August 2022

The S4HL campaign has mobilized the public and engaged policymakers to prioritize women's land rights. With the 2026 presidential campaigns underway, this analysis focuses on the alignment of the land-related pledges in 2026 presidential elections manifestos by four of the eight presidential candidates with the S4HL campaign priorities. Specifically, it seeks to:

- 1) Assess commitments to women's land rights in presidential manifestos.
- 2) Empower grassroots advocacy groups with actionable information; and
- 3) Develop benchmarks and advocacy tools for post-election engagement.

The findings will inform advocacy strategies for the S4HL Uganda Campaign and its partners, enabling evidence-based engagement with political actors and post-election monitoring of commitments related to women's land rights.

It's important to note in 2025, Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), a women's rights advocacy organization launched the National Women's Manifesto themed "*Her Voice*"¹³ which inter alia recognized land as a critical asset for women's empowerment. It also noted that negative social norms and violence against women and girls are a deterrent to the attainment of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Women's Manifesto further highlighted the issue of low levels of asset ownership, especially land amongst women. It also highlighted some key challenges and barriers to women's participation in leadership and decision-making spaces. It is evident that the Women's Manifesto advances women's land rights in ways that align with the S4HL campaign priorities. However, while the Manifesto is broader, embedding land rights within a holistic framework of gender equality and socio-economic transformation, the S4HL analysis is narrower and more targeted, focusing on systemic advocacy in relation to women's land rights in presidential candidates' pledges.

¹³ Uganda Women's Network. 2025. *National Women's Manifesto (2026–2030)*. Available at <https://www.uwonet.or.ug/download/national-womens-manifesto-2026-2030#!>

Methodology

The analysis was carried out through a comprehensive desk review of all manifestos of the four available presidential candidates to establish how they align with the five S4HL priority areas highlighted above. This review aims to assess the extent of political will and commitment expressed by the candidates and to inform the national agenda for gender-equal land relations during Uganda's presidential elections. Besides the 5 S4HL priority areas, the level of commitment to WLRs was based on four parameters, namely:

- a) **Specificity** of campaign pledges related to women's land rights
- b) **Budgetary** commitments allocated to land and gender equality
- c) **Implementation** mechanisms proposed for delivering these commitments; and
- d) **Accountability** measures to ensure transparency and enforcement.

Following the desk review, the findings were validated and disseminated through a stakeholder breakfast meeting, providing an opportunity for feedback and consensus-building.

Limitation of the analysis

While this review provides valuable insights into the alignment of presidential candidates' manifestos with the S4HL priorities, several limitations should be noted. First, the analysis relies entirely on the content of the manifestos, which often contain aspirational statements rather than binding commitments and may omit critical details on implementation or financing. Second, the study does not verify the candidates' political will or capacity to deliver on their pledges; a manifesto promise does not guarantee actual implementation. Third, although the methodology included budgetary commitments as a criterion, all the manifestos lacked detailed financial allocations, limiting the ability to assess feasibility.

The scope of the analysis was also restricted to four candidates, as the manifestos of other contenders were not easily accessible despite efforts to obtain them through online sources, social media platforms, and media houses. Additionally, the review does not incorporate perspectives from grassroots women, cultural leaders, or land governance institutions, which could have provided richer insights into practical barriers and opportunities.

Another limitation is that the analysis represents a static snapshot of manifestos reviewed in November 2025; candidates may revise their positions during campaigns or after elections, making the findings time sensitive. Finally, while the analysis assumes that general land reforms will benefit women, it does not fully interrogate whether proposed measures address structural gender inequalities, leaving gender-specific gaps in the evaluation.

CHAPTER II: PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES' MANIFESTOS AND WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

At the start of the presidential elections cycle, over 100 Ugandans picked nomination forms - the first step in “expressing interest in running for the top job in the country.”¹⁴

The Electoral Commission (EC), Uganda’s statutory body mandated to “organize, conduct and supervise elections,”¹⁵ released the electoral roadmap and scheduled the nomination of presidential candidates for September 23–24, 2025. The nomination process took place at the EC’s Head Office Grounds in Lubowa, Kigo-Lweza Road, in Makindye Ssabagabo Municipal Council, Wakiso District.¹⁶

At the end of the nomination process, a total of eight candidates were successfully nominated.



¹⁴ Elizabeth Kamurungi. “Influx of Presidential Aspirants: Democracy or Political Circus?” Daily Monitor, August 16, 2025. Available at <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/influx-of-presidential-aspirants-democracy-political-circus--5156880>.

¹⁵ Article 60, Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995)

¹⁶ Electoral Commission. “Progress of the Exercise of Nomination of Candidates for General Elections, 2025/2026.” Electoral Commission Uganda. Available at: <https://www.ec.or.ug/news/progress-exercise-nomination-candidates-general-elections-20252026>. Accessed November 2025.

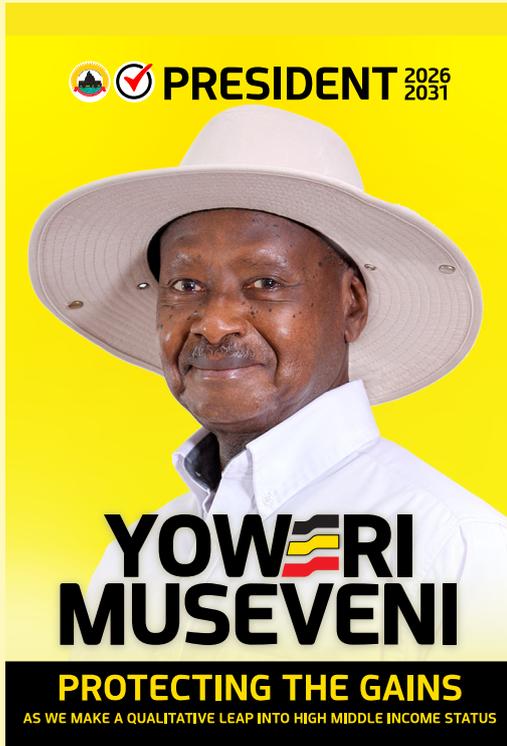


Electoral Commission members during the presidential nominations at the EC headquarters (Source: Electoral Commission Facebook page)

It's note-worthy that for the first time since the return to multiparty democracy in Uganda, all the candidates are sponsored by political parties. This in theory suggests that each candidate represents their party policy positions on various issues including those that affect women e.g. their land and property rights. Additionally, this is the first time that there is no female presidential candidate. The absence of a female presidential candidate, naturally assumed to be allies to women's agenda underscores the urgent need for S4HL to intensify advocacy to ensure WLRs remain an election priority. In the subsequent section, we analyze the manifestos of these candidates, based on and extract representations from a women's land rights perspective.

YOWERI TIBUHABURWA KAGUTA MUSEVENI

PARTY AFFILIATION: National Resistance Movement (NRM)



Overview of Manifesto and General Land Policy and Related Commitments:

The NRM's 2026–2031 manifesto, themed *“Protecting the Gains as We Make a Qualitative Leap into High Middle-Income Status,”* is anchored on five pillars:

1. Growing the economy and creating wealth
2. Infrastructure development
3. Human development
4. Democracy, good governance, and security
5. Regional integration and political federation

Although land governance is not explicitly highlighted under these pillars, it is inherently linked to several of them, particularly those on economic growth, wealth creation, infrastructure, security, and human development, given the central role of land in achieving these objectives.

For instance, under section 3.3 (p.116) on affordable housing, the manifesto pledges to purchase and develop land with requisite infrastructure and allocate it to private developers for the construction of affordable housing. Similarly, commitments under Section 4.4 on environment and natural resource management (p.145) have a strong land dimension, as resources such as forests and wetlands are inseparable from land governance.

The promise to strengthen security of life and property under Section 5.4 (pp.155–156) also encompasses land as a critical form of property and the country's territorial integrity. Under Section 5.5 on promoting justice and the rule of law (p.163), the NRM pledges, among other things, to expedite the resolution of civil cases pending in various courts and to strengthen the capacity of Local Council Courts (LCCs) to effectively execute their mandate. These commitments have a strong land governance dimension because land disputes constitute a significant portion of the judicial case backlog, and LCCs play a critical role in delivering land justice, particularly in matters relating to customary land. Relatedly, the manifesto

pledges to promote the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms and to conduct public awareness campaigns on citizens' rights to justice and the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms (p.166).

The manifesto's explicit land related commitments appear in the dedicated section on land governance (Section 5.8, pp.170–177). This section reviews Uganda's land governance trajectory from the pre-colonial era through colonial and post-colonial periods, culminating in the 1995 Constitution and the Land Act, 1998. It highlights reforms introduced by the NRM, notably vesting land ownership in the people and recognizing multiple tenure systems, namely: customary, freehold, leasehold, and mailo.

Despite these reforms, the manifesto acknowledges persistent land-related challenges (pp.172–173), including:

- a) Illegal eviction of lawful tenants on mailo land
- b) Unfair settlement practices where landlords allocate less land than tenants occupy
- c) District Land Boards allocating already occupied customary land
- d) Lack of land titles, limiting access to credit and investment
- e) Fraudulent multiple titling by corrupt dealers and officials
- f) Failure to notify lessees about lease renewals
- g) Judicial corruption leading to unfair rulings in land cases
- h) Cultural norms excluding vulnerable groups from land inheritance
- i) Land fragmentation undermining agricultural productivity

To address these challenges, the NRM pledges to continue implementing mass land titling, register customary landowners (whether individual, family, or communal) in accordance with the law and issue Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs), issue Land Inventory Protocols (LIPs) and Certificates of Occupancy (COOs) to tenants by occupancy (bibanja holders), and reduce the turnaround time for land transactions from 10 to 7 working days, among other measures aimed at improving efficiency and strengthening land governance (pp. 176-177).

Specific Pledges on or related to WLRs:

The NRM manifesto does not have express pledges on WLRs. However, there are opportunities in some promises that can be used to advance the women's land rights agenda. For example:

- i. The NRM manifesto recognizes "traditional cultural practices that deny vulnerable groups like **women**, persons with disabilities, children, youth among others from inheriting land" (p. 173) as one of the persistent land governance challenges in Uganda.

- ii. Among the promises in the manifesto is to “continue the land registration of customary owners (individual, family and communal lands) in accordance with the law” and issue them with CCOs.
- iii. The NRM manifesto promises to enhance access to justice by strengthening the capacity of Local Council Courts (LCCs) to effectively execute their mandate; as well as to promote ADR.
- iv. The NRM manifesto further pledges to conduct public awareness campaigns on citizens’ rights to justice and the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms (p.166).

Alignment of Candidate’s Pledges with S4HL Campaign Priorities:

The S4HL Campaign is premised on five priority areas. The table below summarizes the five priorities juxtaposed with NRM’s manifesto promises

No.	S4HL Priority	Related promise in the NRM Manifesto
1	Entrenched social norms and cultural practices restricting women’s access, ownership, and control of land;	Recognizes social norms hindering women’s land rights as a land governance issue
2	Insufficient funding and limited institutional capacity within land management and administration systems to support gender-responsive land governance;	No mention
3	Low levels of awareness among rights holders, duty bearers, and communities regarding legal and policy frameworks protecting women’s land rights	Promises to conduct public awareness campaigns on citizens’ rights to justice and the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms
4	Limited access to justice for women in land-related disputes; and	Promises to enhance access to justice by fighting case backlog, strengthening LCCs and promoting ADR
5	Weak collective voice and fragmented agency of grassroots women in land governance processes	No mention

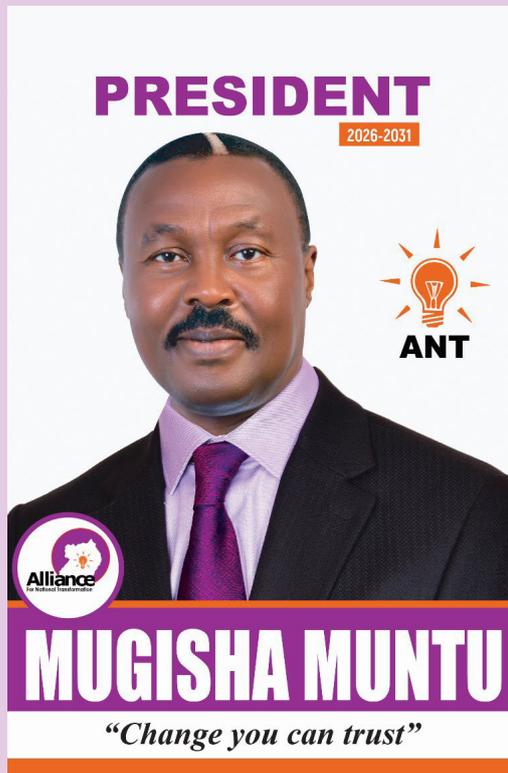
Analysis of Strengths and Gaps on or related to WLRs:

The NRM manifesto provides opportunities that can be leveraged to advance women's land rights in Uganda. These include:

- a) The recognition of regressive cultural norms that hinder women's land rights as a land governance challenge creates an entry point for advocating concrete measures to transform discriminatory social norms affecting women's rights to access, use and own land.
- b) The inclusion of 'family' in the promise to issue Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs) offers an avenue to ensure women are listed as family members on CCOs. This strengthens women's tenure security, particularly in a predominantly patriarchal customary land context.
- c) The commitments to expedite the disposal of cases in courts, strengthen Local Council Courts (LCCs), and promote Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) present significant to enhance women's access to land justice. This is especially important in a context where women are disproportionately disadvantaged in the mainstream justice system. LCCs being community-based and less procedurally rigid provide a more accessible platform for resolving land disputes. Similarly, ADR mechanisms are generally more affordable and user-friendly, further improving women's chances of securing land justice.
- d) The promise to conduct public awareness campaigns on citizens' rights to justice and fundamental freedoms can be used to raise awareness about women's constitutional and statutory rights to property under the various laws in Uganda.

MUGISHA GREGORY MUNTUYERA

POLITICAL PARTY: Alliance for National Transformation (ANT)



Overview of the Manifesto General Land and related Policy Commitments

ANT pledges to deliver *“Change You Can Trust”* for a Uganda that works for everyone. Its manifesto premised on seven core themes split into chapters, and they are:

1. Production and wealth creation
2. Infrastructure for enabling development
3. Social services, housing and urbanization
4. Public sector administration
5. Democracy, governance and security
6. Affirmative action for special categories
7. Foreign relations and diplomacy

While land governance is cross-cutting in these seven areas, land rights are explicitly clustered under the ‘Production and Wealth Creation’ chapter. The cross-cutting nature of land policy in the manifesto reflects in various ways:

- a) Under production and wealth creation, priorities like agriculture, industry and mining, as well as tourism have a strong land governance lens. Policy interventions around food security, enhanced agricultural production, etc. have a land link which are not expressly highlighted in the manifesto.
- b) Under the section on infrastructure for enabling development, specifically housing and urbanization (pp. 33–34), ANT pledges to review land and housing legal frameworks to foster an enabling environment for government–private sector collaboration in delivering decent and affordable housing for all citizens. It proposes partnerships with public and private financial institutions to leverage pension and insurance funds, thereby offering affordable long-term financing at lower interest rates. ANT also commits to addressing

the lack of a comprehensive and functional mortgage policy, and to reviewing land policies and laws to ensure equitable access and use, protect landowners, and redress historical injustices through appropriate legal processes that promote inclusive development. Needless to say, infrastructure for oil and gas, ICT, transport etc. also require land acquisition for their implementation.

- c) Under chapter 5 on public sector administration (pp. 39), the ANT recognizes that centrality of the public sector in the realization inclusive and sustainable national development that improves the wellbeing of citizens. ANT calls for accountable leadership, well-remunerated public servants, corruption-free and lean size of the public sector. While land governance is not expressly mentioned in these pledges, it's note-worthy that land administration and management services are a core government function and would benefit from a functional public service machinery.
- d) In Chapter 7, "Affirmative Action for Special Categories" (p. 42), the ANT identifies women, alongside orphans, elders, and veterans (p. 43), as vulnerable groups deserving targeted support, and expresses a commitment to building an inclusive economy through specific measures aimed at transforming the lives of citizens facing socio-economic or environmental disadvantages. The manifesto acknowledges the enduring impact of historical injustices (social, cultural, economic, and political) that have constrained opportunities and livelihoods, and recognizes that women bear additional social and domestic responsibilities that hinder their upward mobility and sustainable prosperity. ANT pledges to uphold and review affirmative measures for women, especially those engaged in small businesses and political spaces, and further commits to promoting gender parity in political representation while institutionalizing gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting as core elements of decision-making and program implementation (p. 44).

The ANT manifesto however has a dedicated section (2.2) on **Land Rights** (pp. 16). It grounds its land policy commitments on the belief that "land is life, culture, and livelihood" in Uganda. It envisions land as a source of dignity, prosperity, and harmony rather than conflict or exploitation. ANT promises to:

1. Guarantee security of tenure for **all** citizens.
2. Ensure fair compensation where land acquisition is unavoidable.
3. Protect citizens from illegal evictions.
4. Enforce transparent land governance.
5. Support community land registration.
6. Prioritize **justice** for **vulnerable groups**, especially **women** and the poor.
7. End land grabbing.
8. Resolve conflicts between pastoralists and cultivators.
9. Strengthen laws safeguarding land ownership and use.

Specific Pledges on or related to WLRs:

The ANT manifesto does not express pledges on WLRs. However, there are opportunities in some promises that can be used to advance the women's land rights agenda. For example:

- a) The manifesto offers only broad acknowledgments of the plight of marginalized groups, among whom women are mentioned, who continue to face historical injustices rooted in social, cultural, economic, and political systems. These injustices have constrained women's livelihoods, burdened them with additional responsibilities, and limited their opportunities for self-development and transition from poverty to sustained prosperity. This can provide an avenue to advance WLRs.
- b) The manifesto further pledges that an ANT government will prioritize justice for vulnerable groups, particularly women and the poor, whose land rights are often ignored.
- c) However, the manifesto does not specify the strategies, actions, or mechanisms through which this commitment would be achieved, rendering the pledge largely rhetorical rather than actionable.

Alignment of Candidate's Pledges with S4HL Campaign Priorities:

The S4HL Campaign is premised on five priority areas. The table below summarizes the five priorities juxtaposed with ANT's manifesto promises

No.	S4HL Campaign Priorities	Commitment in the ANT Manifesto
1	Entrenched social norms and cultural practices restricting women's access, ownership, and control of land	None
2	Insufficient funding and limited institutional capacity within land management and administration systems to support gender-responsive land governance	Gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting
3	Low levels of awareness among rights holders, duty bearers, and communities regarding legal and policy frameworks protecting women's land rights	None directly related to this

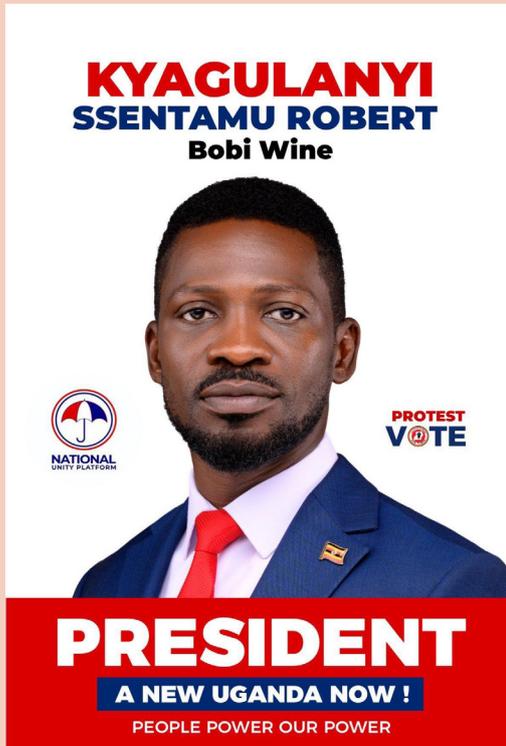
4	Limited access to justice for women in land-related disputes; and	Pledges to prioritize justice for vulnerable groups, particularly women and the poor—whose land rights are often ignored.
5	Weak collective voice and fragmented agency of grassroots women in land governance processes	No mention

Analysis of Strengths and Gaps on or related to WLRs:

- a) The ANT manifesto promises to implement gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting. While this lacks specificity, this pledge can be an avenue to provide financing for initiatives related to WLRs.
- b) While the manifesto commits to reviewing land policies and laws to ensure equitable access and use, this pledge remains broad and undefined. However, the promise on equitable land reforms could also avail an opportunity to tighten legal and policy gaps around implementation of WLRs.
- c) The promise to protect landowners and address historical injustices through inclusive legal processes is notable and can be an avenue for addressing injustices that women have experienced in the context of land rights. However, without clear articulation of how women, who are disproportionately affected by discriminatory practices will benefit, the commitment risks remaining rhetorical rather than actionable.
- d) While the manifesto references initiatives such as the issuance of Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs), Certificates of Occupancy (COOs), and Systematic Land Adjudication and Certification (SLAAC), it fails to explicitly link these to the advancement of WLRs.

KYAGULANYI ROBERT SENTAMU

PARTY AFFILIATION: National Unity Platform (NUP)



Overview of Manifesto and General Land Policy and Related Commitments:

The NUP manifesto, under the theme “*A New Uganda Now*” is premised on eleven priority areas (pp. V), namely:

1. Restore freedom, constitutionalism, and human rights.
2. End corruption and wasteful government expenditure.
3. Consolidate national unity, rebuild war-torn communities, and eliminate sectarianism.
4. Guarantee equal access to quality public services — clean water, healthcare, education, energy, and public infrastructure.
5. Create 10 million new jobs by 2032, leveraging tourism (25.3%), manufacturing (60%), sports, and the creative economy (14.7%).
6. Establish a public-school feeding program to transform agriculture, ensure food security, enhance education outcomes and support a healthy population.
7. Stop land grabbing and guarantee secure land rights for all.
8. Empower regional and local governance through real devolution.
9. Position the diaspora as a strategic asset and strengthen foreign policy for Uganda’s development and competitiveness.
10. Ensure sustainable management of natural resources and climate resilience
11. Transform Uganda into a tech-driven economy through leveraging technology resources and innovation.

NUP's manifesto has a strong land dimension given the centrality of land to attainment of most of its pledges including those on infrastructure, agriculture, food security, natural resource governance and climate resilience. The party's manifesto presents a comprehensive and reform-oriented general land policy under Manifesto Priority 7 - **Stop Land Grabbing and Guarantee Secure Land Rights for All** (pp. 68-72)

The NUP manifesto recognizes that land is central to the livelihoods and identity of Ugandans, yet most people lack formal or recognized ownership rights. Although customary tenure is the dominant landholding system, NUP notes that government policies under the NRM have failed to adequately protect these rights, resulting in widespread land grabbing by powerful elites, investors, and foreign companies. NUP links such land grabs to corruption and weak governance, leaving small farmers dispossessed, food insecure, and poorly compensated.

The manifesto also notes that in Uganda, between 4–8% of land is controlled by foreign investors for projects such as oil palm plantations, carbon offset forests, and oil extraction (pg 70). These developments have led to environmental degradation, destruction of cultural sites, displacement of communities, and loss of livelihoods. Addressing the crisis requires supporting small-scale, community-led agroecological farming to strengthen local food systems and protect citizens' land rights. To address these issues, NUP promises to:

- a) **Secure Customary Land Rights:** Restore land to rightful owners, establish and operationalize a National Customary Land Registry, promote Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs), and enhance community education on land rights
- b) **Protect Mailo Land and Tenants:** Enforce legal safeguards for mailo landowners and tenants, introduce dispute resolution mechanisms, and ensure government oversight of large-scale mailo land transactions.
- c) **Secure Freehold Ownership:** Amend land laws, strengthen enforcement to protect freehold owners, and create a transparent registry of land transactions.
- d) **Prevent Land Grabbing:** Mandate transparent, participatory land acquisition for commercial, agricultural, and infrastructure projects; guarantee fair compensation, resettlement support, and livelihood restoration for displaced communities.
- e) **Modernize Land Registration:** Use blockchain to create fraud-proof land records; survey and register all land regardless of tenure; implement a 50-year master physical plan for land, housing, and urban development; conduct housing investment feasibility studies; and impose strict penalties for illegal land grabs.
- f) **Support Smallholder Agriculture:** Prioritize agroecological farming to boost food security; provide technical assistance, financing, and market access; and promote community land trusts and cooperatives for collective land control.
- g) **Safeguard Cultural and Environmental Heritage:** Protect culturally significant sites, forests, wetlands, and biodiversity hotspots from exploitation; ensure displaced communities retain access to cultural, spiritual, and natural resources.
- h) **Strengthen Civil Society and Advocacy:** Guarantee protection for land rights defenders and establish safe, accessible channels for citizens to petition government without fear of intimidation or retaliation.

- i) Secure smallholder farmers' access to land and affordable finance, while promoting agro-processing industries in rural areas to create decent jobs, increase household incomes, and accelerate rural industrialization

Specific Pledges on or related to WLRs:

While NUP's manifesto has a general land agenda, there is no explicit mention of women's land rights. However, rights and roles of women on land can be drawn from the key focus areas of the manifesto.

- a) The commitment to secure customary land rights and protect tenants on mailo-land would significantly protect rights on land for women who are more vulnerable to displacement.
- b) The focus on supporting smallholder farmers can be used to protect women who constitute most small-scale farmers in Uganda.
- c) The pledge to strengthen mechanisms for fair compensation and resettlement for displaced communities can also protect women who are the major land users.
- d) The promise to enhance community education on land rights can include sensitization on WLRs which can benefit women

Alignment of Candidate's Pledges with S4HL Campaign Priorities:

The S4HL Campaign is premised on five priority areas. The table below summarizes the five priorities juxtaposed with NUP's manifesto promises

No	S4HL Commitment	Commitment in the NUP Manifesto
1	Entrenched social norms and cultural practices restricting women's access, ownership, and control of land;	No mention
2	Insufficient funding and limited institutional capacity within land management and administration systems to support gender-responsive land governance;	Promises to use blockchain for land registration and general commitment to efficient governance aligns with S4HL's goal of capable, well-resourced land administration.
3	Low levels of awareness among rights holders, duty bearers, and communities regarding legal and policy frameworks protecting women's land rights	Promises to strengthen awareness campaigns to educate rural communities on their land rights and processes for registration.

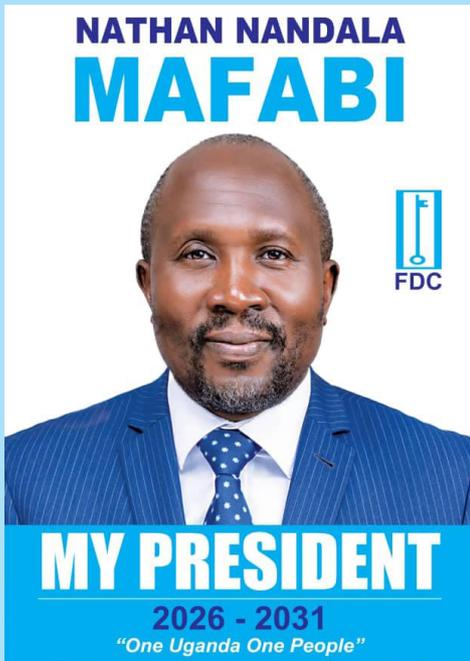
4	Limited access to justice for women in land-related disputes; and	Promises to protect land defenders and community leaders who fight injustices on land and to provide mechanisms for communities' engagement with policy makers for improved tenure security
5	Weak collective voice and fragmented agency of grassroots women in land governance processes	No mention

Analysis of Strengths and Gaps on or related to WLRs:

- a) While the manifesto commits to stop land grabbing and guarantee secure land rights for all (Priority 7) and mentions gender equity (Priority 1), it lacks a specific, actionable strategy to address deep-rooted patriarchal norms and cultural practices that systematically exclude women from land ownership and control.
- b) The manifesto proposes blockchain-based land registration and the establishment of a National Customary Land Registry. However, it does not address the chronic underfunding and weak capacity of land administration institutions especially at local government level to deliver gender-responsive land services.
- c) The manifesto emphasizes legal reforms and transparency but doesn't specifically address the gap in legal literacy among women, communities, and duty bearers regarding existing land rights laws.
- d) Although the manifesto proposes legal reforms and anti-corruption measures, it does not highlight the specific barriers women face in accessing land justice, such as high costs, lack of gender-sensitive justice mechanisms and conflicting statutory and customary legal systems.
- e) The manifesto promotes decentralization and local governance (Priority 8) but fails to ensure meaningful participation of grassroots women in land governance structures. Positions provided for women are insufficient if women lack the agency, support, or influence to effect change.

NANDALA MAFABI JAMES NATHAN

PARTY AFFILIATION: Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)



Overview of the Manifesto and General Land Policy Commitments:

The FDC manifesto, themed *“Fixing the Economy; Money in our Pockets”* is based on five pillars, namely:

1. Generating employment opportunities
2. Strategic investments
3. Human capital development
4. Leadership and governance
5. Interest groups

The FDC manifesto’s pillars reveal strong land governance dimensions. Commitments on agriculture, trade and industry; strategic investments in infrastructure, energy, and environment; human capital development in health; and priorities for interest groups such as women are all closely tied to land.

The party’s land policy commitments are reflected in chapter 2.3.1. (Land) on pp. 40. The manifesto notes that land is critical to the development of Uganda for it supports 70% of the population engaged in agriculture. However, utilization of land for development hasn’t been attained fully due to land fragmentation, tenure insecurity, increased population and disputes over land ownership. The FDC manifesto proposes eight systemic reforms.

1. Conduct a thorough review of the 1998 Land Act, the 1995 Constitution, and other relevant laws to identify weaknesses, ambiguities, and loopholes that contribute to land insecurities.
2. Simplify registration processes for customary land rights
3. Put stringent measures on acquisition of special land titles
4. Institute a strict timeframe for handling land matters to two years in the courts of law

5. Ensure compliance with established laws relating to land acquisition and compensation by government
6. Enforce laws that protect women's land ownership rights including equal inheritance and ensure women's participation in land governance
7. Enforce integrated national and district land use plans, especially for urban expansion, agriculture, and conservation
8. Review and harmonize land and environmental laws to clarify institutional roles and reduce conflict between NEMA, NFA, Ministry of Lands, Housing & Urban Development (MLHUD) and local governments

The FDC's general land policy commitments on (pg 40) are substantive and show an intention to reform the sector. They create a foundational framework that, if implemented effectively, could benefit all land rights holders, including women.

Specific Pledges on or related to Women Land Rights

The FDC manifesto's general land commitments are strong and also includes pledges that explicitly address or can advance Women's Land Rights (WLRs). These include the pledges to:

- a) Enforce laws protecting women's land ownership, including equal inheritance, and ensure women's participation in land governance.
- b) Establish special desks to assist vulnerable women and others in acquiring land titles under Pillar 5.1 (Women) (p. 69).
- c) Review land laws, simplify administration processes, and fight corruption to enhance women's legal awareness and access to justice (p. 40).
- d) Remove gendered barriers to entrepreneurship through affirmative action in government grants and procurement under Pillar 5 (p. 69)—an economic empowerment measure that can indirectly improve women's ability to purchase and retain land.
- e) Conduct massive sensitization against cultural practices that perpetuate gender-based violence (p. 69).
- f) Uphold the Bill of Rights in the 1995 Constitution (p. 64), which includes protections on equality and gender equal property rights relevant to WLRs.
- g) Train and build capacity in relevant institutions to deliver high-quality services which can include gender-inclusive land services (p. 64).

Alignment of Candidate's Pledges with S4HL Campaign Priorities:

The S4HL Campaign is premised on five priority areas. The table below summarizes the five priorities juxtaposed with FDC's manifesto promises

No	S4HL Commitment	Commitment in the FDC Manifesto
1	Entrenched social norms and cultural practices restricting women's access, ownership, and control of land;	<p>Promise to enforce laws against cultural practices that violate women land rights and support to register interest in their land.</p> <p>Conduct massive sensitization against cultural practices that perpetuate gender-based violence (p. 69).</p>
2	Insufficient funding and limited institutional capacity within land management and administration systems to support gender-responsive land governance;	<p>Promises a thorough review of laws, simplifying land administration processes, and fighting corruption</p> <p>Commits to train and build capacity for all relevant institutions to provide high quality services to all Ugandans.</p>
3	Low levels of awareness among rights holders, duty bearers, and communities regarding legal and policy frameworks protecting women's land rights	Conduct massive sensitization against cultural practices that perpetuate gender-based violence (p. 69).
4	Limited access to justice for women in land-related disputes; and	Uphold the Bill of Rights in the 1995 Constitution (p. 64), which includes protections on access to justice, equality and gender equal property rights.
5	Weak collective voice and fragmented agency of grassroots women in land governance processes	Enforce laws that protect women's land ownership rights including equal inheritance and <i>ensure women's participation in land governance</i>

Analysis of Strengths and Gaps on or related to Women Land Rights

The FDC manifesto generally has express provisions on WLRs that are aligned with the S4HL campaign as highlighted above. However, it can be enhanced. For example:

- a) FDC promises judicial reforms on land which can be an avenue to advance WLRs, but it fails to address the specific barriers women face, such as gender biases, the high cost of justice or ADR mechanisms that are sensitive to power imbalances.
- b) While FDC promises to uphold the Bill of Rights, it does not explicitly reference gender equal land rights as one of the issues. That notwithstanding, this promise can still provide a window for advancing WLRs.

CHAPTER III: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Uganda's 2026 presidential manifestos reveal varying degrees of commitment to advancing WLRs. While all four parties acknowledge land governance as a critical development issue, their approaches differ significantly in specificity, depth, and alignment with the S4HL campaign priorities.

NRM's manifesto recognizes cultural norms that deny women inheritance rights and pledges mass land titling, issuance of Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs) and Certificates of Occupancy (COOs), and improved access to justice through strengthened LC Courts and ADR mechanisms. It also promises public awareness campaigns on citizens' rights. However, it lacks explicit financial commitments, accountability measures, and strategies to enhance women's voice in land governance. Overall, NRM demonstrates moderate commitment, with strong potential for advocacy around its recognition of discriminatory norms and justice reforms.

The **ANT** manifesto recognises the centrality of land as "life, culture, and livelihood" and pledges tenure security, justice for vulnerable groups (including women), and gender-responsive budgeting. However, its commitments remain broad, with no clear mechanisms or resources dedicated to WLRs. While ANT acknowledges historical injustices and promises gender mainstreaming, it fails to address entrenched social norms or guarantee women's participation in governance. Its alignment with S4HL priorities is weak, except for a general nod to gender budgeting and justice.

NUP's manifesto is generally focuses on stopping land grabbing, securing customary rights, and modernizing land registration through modern technologies like blockchain. It emphasizes community education and protection for land rights defenders, which can indirectly benefit women. However, it does not explicitly tackle patriarchal norms or ensure women's agency in governance. While NUP proposes systemic reforms and awareness campaigns, its silence on gender-specific strategies limits its transformative potential.

FDC stands out for its explicit pledges to enforce laws protecting women's land ownership and inheritance rights, ensure women's participation in land governance, and establish special desks for vulnerable women seeking land titles. It also promises massive sensitization against harmful cultural practices and institutional capacity building. Despite these strengths, FDC lacks detailed financing plans and accountability frameworks. Nevertheless, its manifesto offers the most comprehensive alignment with S4HL priorities among the four parties.

Overall, from the above analysis, **FDC** leads in specificity and gender-sensitive commitments. **NRM** offers moderate opportunities through justice reforms and recognition of cultural barriers. **NUP** and **ANT** remain largely rhetorical, with limited actionable strategies for WLRs. More importantly and worryingly, none of the manifestos adequately address financing or accountability for WLRs, signalling a critical advocacy gap. The table below summarises the analysis.

Tabular Comparative Analysis Based on S4HL Priorities

S4HL Priority	 NRM	 NUP	 ANT	 FDC
1. Social norms restricting women's land rights	Recognizes harmful norms but no clear action	No mention	No mention	Promises sensitization and enforcement of laws against harmful practices
2. Funding & institutional capacity for gender-responsive land governance	No mention	Mentions gender-responsive budgeting (broad)	Blockchain for land registry (indirect)	Promises institutional capacity building but no financing details
3. Legal literacy & awareness	Public awareness campaigns on rights	No direct mention	Community education on land rights	Massive sensitization against harmful practices
4. Access to justice for women	Strengthen LCCs, promote ADR	Justice for vulnerable groups	Protect land defenders, dispute resolution	Enforce constitutional rights, simplify processes, special desks for women
5. Women's voice & agency in land governance	No mention	No mention	No mention	Explicit pledge to ensure women's participation in land governance

CHAPTER IV: ADVOCACY MESSAGES

Based on the five S4HL priority areas in Uganda, here are key messages to all presidential candidates which we urge them to undertake when elected to power:

Key Messages

1. Transform Social Norms and Cultural Practices

Commit to dismantling harmful cultural norms that deny women equal rights to inherit, own, and control land. Uganda cannot achieve inclusive development while half its population is not enjoying their full land rights.

2. Allocate Financing and Build Institutional Capacity

Without dedicated financing, promises remain rhetoric. Once elected, we call upon the government to commit resources for gender-responsive land governance and strengthen local land administration systems to serve women equitably.

3. Enhance Legal Literacy and Awareness

Knowledge is power. Women need to know their land and property rights to claim them. When elected, we call on you to scale up nationwide awareness campaigns on women's land rights and including legal remedies for accessing land justice.

4. Guarantee Women's Access to Land Justice

Justice delayed is justice denied, especially for women who are already vulnerable and marginalized. We urge you to strengthen gender-sensitive dispute resolution mechanisms and make justice affordable and accessible, especially such historically marginalized sections of the society like women in all their diversity including girls, orphans, widows and the elderly.

5. Amplify Women's Voice and Agency in Land Governance

Women must not only benefit from land reforms, but they must also shape them. We call on you to guarantee women's representation and decision-making power in land governance structures.

Call-to-Action

In light of the above advocacy messages and in alignment with the S4HL priorities, the campaign calls on all presidential candidates to commit to the following measures during the election period and after assuming office to promote women's land rights.

1. Address Entrenched Social Norms and Cultural Practices

- a) Integrate gender-transformative strategies into their land governance strategies.
- b) Undertake to partner with cultural and religious leaders to champion women's land rights.
- c) Commit to fund community sensitization programs to challenge discriminatory norms.

2. Allocate Financing and Strengthen Institutional Capacity

- a) Commit to introduce gender-responsive budgeting for land programs.
- b) Pledge to allocate specific funds for training all land administration and management institutions on women's land rights and equip them to deliver gender-sensitive services.

3. Enhance Legal Literacy and Awareness

- a) Commit to integrate gender and women's land rights into civic education and school curricula.
- b) Promise to use mass media and grassroots networks to disseminate information on land laws.
- c) Support CSOs in community-based legal literacy programs.

4. Guarantee Women's Access to Land Justice

- a) Commit to enhance and fund Local Council Courts' capacity to deliver gender-inclusive land justice and institutionalize ADR.
- b) Commit to pass the national legal aid policy and provide legal aid for especially women in land disputes.

5. Amplify Women's Voice and Agency in Land Governance

- a) Undertake to support grassroots women's networks to participate in policy dialogues.
- b) Commit to institutionalize gender audits in land governance processes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this analysis underscores the urgent need for Uganda's presidential candidates to move beyond rhetoric and demonstrate genuine commitment to women's land rights. By committing to address entrenched social norms, allocate financing, enhancing legal literacy, guarantee access to land justice, and amplify women's voices in governance, candidates can lay the foundation for transformative change. These measures, aligned with the priorities of the Stand for Her Land campaign in Uganda, are not only essential for advancing gender equality but also for ensuring inclusive, sustainable development that benefits all Ugandans.

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STAND FOR HER LAND

HER RIGHTS, HER LAND, A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL.

This is a publication of the Stand for Her Land Campaign Uganda

ABOUT US

The Stand for Her Land (S4HL) campaign is a civil society led global collaborative campaign with a mission to strengthen and advance women's land rights through collective advocacy that aims to close the implementation gap between law and practice.

In Uganda, the campaign is coordinated by Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC) under the auspices of the National Land Coalition comprising of civil society organizations at the national, sub-national and grassroots level.

The five-year campaign is implemented in partnership with Landesa with financial support from BMZ.

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