



## TRANSGENDER EQUALITY UGANDA (TEU)

*Nothing About us without us*

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**“LBQT women’s rights are Women’s rights”** Transgender Equality Uganda together with LBQ women and female sex worker groups choose to challenge all gender bias and inequality inflicted on the community members and demand *for “an equal future in a COVID-19 world.”*

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Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2021: As we count down to 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2021, the International Women’s Day, Transgender women, LBQ women and female sex work human rights groups in Uganda have organized a press conference ahead of the international women’s day celebration. Under the theme **“Women in leadership: *“Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world”*; #IWD2021 and #InternationalWomensDay.**

According to UN Women, the pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems which are in turn amplifying the impacts of the pandemic. Yet, trans women, LBQ women and female sex workers are resilient and continue to positively steer social, political, economic, and cultural change within our communities, and at the national and international levels.

Considering persistent pre-existing social and systemic barriers to LBQT women’s and female sex worker participation in leadership, new barriers have emerged with the COVID-19 pandemic. In our communities, LBQT women and female sex workers are facing increased gender based violence, unpaid care duties, unemployment and poverty. Despite their contribution to COVID-19 response, there is continued disproportionate and intended inadequate representation of women in national COVID-19 policy spaces.



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Aligned with the priority theme of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women “*Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls*”, we demand for trans women, LBQ women and female sex workers’ right to decision-making in all areas of life, equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, and end all forms of violence against women in all their diversities and health-care services specially SRHR services that respond to their unique needs. We need our voices to be heard now more than ever if the COVID-19 pandemic recovery plan is work for all of us with no one left behind.

Research shows that across the globe, female leaders still only govern about 7% of the world’s population. But the Covid-19 pandemic has showcased that women in power can accomplish a great deal in a crisis. The global health crisis is dismantling the stereotype that men are better suited to take charge by showcasing some of the characteristics that highly effective women leaders tend to possess. We call out our political leaders, policy influencers and policy makers to consider trans women, LBQ women and female sex workers ‘to be part of the decisions making bodies and implementation processes to ensure inclusivity on the key issues that affect the trans women, LBQ women and female sex workers who contribute a significant proportion of the national population and whose leaders have also been at the front line on several key issues, COVID-19 being the latest challenge where they have also show cases unique leadership skills in the quest to ensure that the pandemic is curbed. ***They have been and remained the un sung heroes of all times!*** It’s time for them to be recognised as a seat set for them on the decision making tables in the country.

Much has already been contributed by different stakeholders towards violence prevention and there are a number of promising practices. However, LBQT women especially the trans women have been left behind to the extent that their indicators were scrapped by Ministry of health which justifies the urgent need for more targeted programs towards addressing the increasing SGBV, discrimination and stigma among LBQT women and female sex workers. Our issues will only be addressed if we are given a seat at the decision making tables.



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Transgender Equality Uganda together with LBQT women and female sex workers as we get closer to the International Women's Day, we;

- ✚ Celebrate LBQT women and female sex worker's achievements in their diversity in the COVID-19 world
- ✚ Call for accelerated gender parity for all women of diversity
- ✚ And demand for space at the national COVID-19 response and recovery planning table if our issues are to be integrated in the national response and recovery programs.

Silence is no longer an option anymore, The Trans Murder Monitoring project revealed a total 350 trans and gender-diverse people registered murdered between 1 October 2019 and 30 September 2020, representing a 6% increase in reported murders from the 2019 update. Adding up to a total of 3664 reported cases in 75 countries and territories worldwide between 1 January 2008 and 30 September 2020. 98% of those murdered globally were trans women or trans feminine people. What picture is painted in Uganda? A Country that has provided to be against LBQT and sex worker movement!

Today as we are approaching international women's day commemoration, we call upon everyone to contribute towards safe and equal gender balance through enforcing gender equality policies, educating the community, holding perpetrators accountable and providing a strong support network for LBQT women and female sex workers during the COVID-19 world. We must stop victim blaming! Violence should be condoned at all levels.

***"The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights"*** we won't stop until we all live in equal and fair COVID-19 world! We won't stop until our voices are heard in the national COVID-19 policy spaces and our issued included!

Thank you for your time