



## **Voluntary Awareness Taskforce (VAT)**

*Promoting awareness and community appreciation of the United Nations  
Millennium Development Goals and the Government of Uganda  
National Development Plan for sustainable development of Uganda*

### The Social Mobilization and Empowerment Strategic Plan in 20 Districts of Uganda 2010-2012

#### **PUBLIC OPINIONS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**The VAT Initiative** is a multisectoral project of Public Opinions designed and implemented in 20 districts of Uganda to create awareness, literacy and engage local people in the development of their communities and appreciate the United Nations Millennium Development and the National Development Program.

**The VAT Initiative** is set to commence operation in January 2010 and will end in 2012. This will therefore steer forward efforts for wealth creation in communities for a better standard of living.

**The VAT Initiative** is being implemented under the *Public-Private Sector Caucusing in District (PRISCAD)* which was recently launched during the 1<sup>st</sup> public dialogue on the United Nations Global Compact which was jointly organized by Public Opinions and Uganda Investment Authority on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009 at Hotel Africana and presided over by Prof Ephraim Kamuntu, Minister of State for Finance, Planning and Economic Development on behalf of H.E Prof Gilbert Bukenya, Vice President of the Republic of Uganda.

**The VAT Initiative** will engage and build the capacity of the communities to fully and effectively participate in the implementation and evaluation of government programs that are geared at attaining the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UN MDGs) and the National Development Plan.

## **BACKGROUND**

Public Opinions is a Civil Society organization working as an African Institute for Strategic studies and a think tank for democracy and good governance, sustainable peace and development and reformation of the United Nations. The organization was founded in 2002 at Makerere University and worked as research, community literacy and advocacy agency during its early days at the University.

## **VOLUNTARY AWARENESS TASKFORCE**

Community awareness and participation is important in the overall implementation of government projects in communities. It is through mass awareness and literacy that communities will appreciate and fully engage in the overall development process and as well as to change their minds for

better living. We want through this project to make sure that public funds serve the purpose it is supposed to serve other than being diverted for personal benefit.

## **FOCUS OF VOLUNTARY AWARENESS TASKFORCE**

The VAT Initiative will focus on key priority issues such as;

- UN MDGs
- Land Reforms/policy
- Peace, Recovery and Development
- Constitutional Education
- Conflict resolution
- Civic Awareness
- Wealth Creation
- Justice, Law and Order
- Mineral Exploration-Associated rights and role of community in mineral development)
- Participatory Budgeting (Transparency and Accountability)
- Deepening and reforms in decentralization
- Domestic Rights
- Investment/entrepreneurship

## **STRUCTURES OF IMPLEMENTATION**

### **1. PATRON**

The Patron is the highest focal person of the project and he or she oversees the operations of the Voluntary Awareness Committees at all levels.

### **2. NATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE (NCC).**

This is a high level National Taskforce and shall be composed of 99 highly reputable personalities drawn from the business community, public service and the academia. The NCC shall be a “Study Group on Sustainable Development in Uganda” and shall compile and publish a report of its findings on sustainable development of Uganda. The NCC is responsible for among others;

- Resources Mobilization

- Issuing guidelines and materials for awareness and community participation
- Receiving and analyzing field reports
- Conducting monthly meetings
- Monitoring activities of the Voluntary Committees in the Districts
- Preparing and publishing document/report on sustainable development
- Interacting with lower voluntary committees

### **3. DISTRICT VOLUNATRY COMMITTEE (DVC)**

The District Voluntary Awareness Committee is composed of 27 members who are residents of the district and shall oversee activities of the Parish Voluntary Committees in the district. The District Voluntary Committee is composed of religious leaders, traditional and opinion leaders, Business leaders, academia and Civil Society Representatives in a give district.

Training Sessions and workshops will be conducted for the 27 committee members with focus on priority issues such as;

- Sustainable development
- Participatory budgeting
- Community policing
- Personal Competitiveness (Interpersonal relationship, leadership and organizational skills)
- Public policy
- Entrepreneurship and Investment
- Resources Mobilization and Management

Members from the National Coordination Committee (NCC) shall from time to time be invited to interact and share experience with the District Voluntary Committees.

### **4. PARISH VOLUNTARY COMMITTEE (PVC)**

This is composed of 50 (fifty) persons/members who are residents of the parish. The PVC is charged with identification of key issues i.e. the problems that affects the community. It is also charged with generating ideas

or solutions from the community in response to the challenges/problems that affects the community.

The 50 members from each parish in the district is entitled to participate in the;

- District Public Dialogues on the theme “ *Peace and Sustainable Development-Opportunities, challenges and way forward*”
- Subcounty Training Sessions with focus on peace, sustainable development, community policing, participatory budgeting, business start up, project planning and management, wealth creation, resources mobilization, monitoring and evaluation, etc.

Members of the National Coordination Committee shall participate in the district public dialogues and sub county training sessions as facilitators, presenters, discussants, etc. The members of the NCC will freely interact and share experience with the Parish Voluntary Committee members in the districts who will later on disseminate the acquired information to the general public in the parish. Membership of the Parish Voluntary Committee is drawn from all villages in the given parish such that effective and broad based representation is ensured. Gender balance will as well be considered while constituting the committees.

## **THE NATIONAL SECRETARIAT**

This is the administrative and management organ of the project and is charged with day to days operations of the project and shall coordinate all the structures of the project.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND CORE ACTIVITIES**

**PUBLIC OPINIONS** together with its partners will implement VAT through application of the following strategies;

- Identification of Voluntary Committee members at all levels
- Formation and operationalisation of the Voluntary Committees
- Organizing Public Dialogue and Dinner for the National Coordination Committee (NCC)
- Organizing Public dialogues organized at district levels and will bring together all members of the Parish Voluntary Committees in a given

district such that they articulate on key issues that affects the development of their district

- Consultative meetings with religious and traditional leaders, local government and NGO Officials
- Films and documentary shows in trading centers and schools
- Organizing Sub county training sessions for the members of the Parish Voluntary Committees
- District Training Workshops for the members of the District Voluntary Committees
- Organizing National Training Convention for all members of the National Coordination Committee (NCC)
- Community Outreach programs and formation of Voluntary Committees in Schools with focus on wealth creation, development, personal responsibility, etc.
- Printing and distribution of brochures, newsletters, magazines, calendars, posters, etc.
- Exchange programs and routine visits for stateholders or Volunteers from within and outside the district
- Talk shows on Televisions and Radio Stations
- Writing opinions in news papers

## **PERSONAL REPORT/STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Each member of the National Coordination Committee, the District Voluntary Committee and the Parish Voluntary Committee shall prepare and submit to Public Opinions a personal statement on his or her perception of sustainable development. The personal statements will therefore help in the preparation of a comprehensive document on sustainable development of Uganda,

## **GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE**

The VAT Initiative will be implemented in 20 (twenty) districts selected from all sub regions of Uganda as indicated below;

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Arua (West Nile)   | 11. Kayunga (Buganda) |
| 2. Bugiri (Busoga)    | 12. Kiruhura (Ankole) |
| 3. Bushenyi (Ankole)  | 13. Kitgum (Acholi)   |
| 4. Busia (Budama)     | 14. Lira (Lango)      |
| 5. Fortportal (Toro)  | 15. Luwero (Buganda)  |
| 6. Gulu (Acholi)      | 16. Masindi (Bunyoro) |
| 7. Hoima (Bunyoro)    | 17. Mbale (Bugisu)    |
| 8. Iganga (Busoga)    | 18. Moroto (Karamoja) |
| 9. Kapchorwa (Sebei)  | 19. Mpigi (Buganda)   |
| 10. Kasese (Rwenzori) | 20. Soroti (Teso)     |

## **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

The VAT Initiative is expected to directly benefit at least 40,000 persons.

The VAT initiative will yield multisectoral and cross cutting benefits to both direct participants and the community and the nation as a whole;

- Participants will be equipped with leadership and organizational skills
- Field report on sustainable development printed and disseminated to government and the general public
- Effective awareness and appreciation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and the Government of Uganda Programs
- Personal competitiveness of participants attained
- Identification of community challenges and this will help government in its planning
- Generating solution to community challenges
- Bridging the gap between the rich and the poor in Uganda
- Deepening and appreciation of public private partnership
- Participatory budgeting (Transparency and accountability) ensured in the districts
- Seeds of dialogues and conflict resolution and management sowed
- Wealth creation, resources mobilization and management skills imparted amongst the direct participants
- Business Community, Proprietors, investors engaged in social activities for social economical transformation of Uganda

- Participants/voluntary committees equipped to monitor, evaluate and act as watchdogs of government programs and donor funded projects

## **FUNDING OF VAT INITIATIVE**

The VAT Initiative is a two (2) years project and will be funded through;

1. Voluntary Contribution from members of the National Coordination Committee
2. Donations from Development Partners
3. Individual Contributions
4. Contribution from business organizations
5. Contribution from well-wishers
6. Government support

## **SUPPORT NOT ACCEPTED**

Public Opinions will not accept the following contributions;

1. Contributions from political parties in Uganda
2. Conditional contributions from politicians
3. Contributions from terrorist organizations
4. Conditional contribution of Local Governments in districts of operation

## **PARTNERSHIP**

Public Opinions welcome partnership and support from individuals, international organizations, professional associations, Non Governmental Organisations, business organizations from within and outside Uganda to effectively have the project implemented.

Please contact us for more information;

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