

Madam Chair, my name is Anita Kiddu Muhanguzi representing Platform for Labour Action as well as the Batwa Community in Uganda. Our organisation is a labour rights focused organisation that protects and promotes the rights of the vulnerable and marginalised workers in Uganda.

The Batwa Pygmies of Uganda live in the the southwestern region of Uganda and their right to work and social security in Uganda is hindered by their lack of formal education and discriminatory legislations that do not protect them as a minority group. Uganda at the moment does not have a minimum wage legislation and this has contributed to the exploitation of this minority group since they fall under the informal sector. The education of minority people is purely low and this limits their chances of employment in the formal sector.

The 1995 Ugandan constitution guarantees the right to education and requires the State and parents to offer basic education to their children. The education policy provides that children be taught in their local languages for the first four years of their education, this is however a general statement with no guidelines for the education of minorities for instance they have not trained Batwa teachers who teach children in their local languages.

In relation to the right to social security in Uganda the social security and pensions schemes were established to alleviate the hardships employees faced after retiring or on losing employment. However the fact that the Batwa are unemployed due to their lack of education, they are not provided for under the social security scheme. Because to be part of the social security scheme you have to be in employment, this is therefore discriminatory against this minority group.

Therefore we recommend, Madam Chair that the government should formulate a policy for the education of minority children and this policy should include incentives that will encourage children to go to school and put into consideration the culture, beliefs and settlement patterns of this minority group. We also recommend that the government should train teachers in the neighbouring communities of the Batwa where minority children are studying from and this will enable such teachers to handle minority children with due consideration of their language and cultural practices. We also recommend that the government should come up with minimum wage legislation which would protect the interests of this minority group in the informal sector. There is also a need for the legislation that refers to minorities to be translated in their local languages so that there is awareness creation among the different communities and their voices are brought together in a policy that caters for their interests. Thank you!