Strengthening Human Rights

Background

The Ugandan Constitution of 1995 provides comprehensive guarantees of fundamental human rights. While human rights like freedom of expression or freedom of religion are widely respected in every day life, others face challenges, in particular the right of equality. Women and children are often denied their rights due to traditional practices and minority groups are often subjected to discrimination. While the 2009 African Peer Review Mechanism recognized progress in human rights legislation in Uganda, it also stated that institutions established to improve the protection of human rights cannot sufficiently fulfill their mandates due to a number of constraints.

German support

Since 2011 the German Government has been funding a human rights project implemented by the German Technical Cooperation agency GIZ, together with three main partners in Uganda: The National Planning Authority, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Ugandan Human Rights Commission.

GIZ is supporting the National Planning Authority (NPA) to integrate human rights into political planning and steering processes. In order to facilitate this, the project cooperates with the Ugandan Bureau of Statistics and the School of Statistics and Applied Economics at Makerere University. Together, they have developed governance and human rights indicators to inform policy formulation and development planning in Uganda. A planned household survey will provide NPA with information on human rights issues relevant for policy planning. Staff and management of the NPA have received training in Rights-Based-Approaches to development planning and programming and can now utilize these skills in their work.

The project supports the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and the Ugandan Human Rights Commission (UHRC) in promoting, protecting and monitoring human rights. The project focuses specifically on women’s and children’s rights as well as on rights of minorities and other vulnerable groups. Particular emphasis is put on networking and coordination amongst and between EOC, UHRC, police, Parliament, and local courts on one hand, and civil society and media on the other. Since public awareness of human rights is critical to empower people to demand respect of their rights, civil society and journalists are supported to facilitate public discourse on human rights and to monitor progress. Support is given to the EOC for the development of a five-year strategic plan. Efforts are also on-going to enhance the complaint management system of the UHRC.