



# UGANDA

## SUMMARY

Uganda is a democratic republic with a governance system comprising national and local governments. The constitution provides for a system of decentralisation and local governments, which is further consolidated in the Local Governments Act 1997 (Cap. 243). In urban settings, there are city, municipal, division/town, ward and cell councils. In rural areas, there are district councils, counties (which are administrative units without a council), sub-county councils, parish councils and village councils. The local government act provides for a minimum of 30% of council seats to be reserved for women and in 2013/14, local government expenditure was 15.1% of total government expenditure. The primary sources of revenue are transfers from national government; however local governments are mandated to raise revenue locally, including property taxes, licences and user fees. Responsibility for transport and environmental protection is shared between national and local governments. Districts and municipal councils are also responsible for the provision of primary and secondary education, safe water supplies and public health, and are encouraged to devolve some services to the lower tiers. Local economic development (LED) is the responsibility of the districts and lower tiers of government.

## 1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Uganda is a republic with a unicameral parliamentary system.<sup>49.1a</sup> The president is directly elected as the head of state and head of government with executive powers. The president nominates the cabinet, subject to parliamentary approval. Parliament has 375 members, known as MPs, and both the president and MPs are elected for a five-year term.

## 2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### 2.1 Constitutional provisions

Chapter 11, Article 176(1) of the Constitution<sup>49.2a</sup> of the Republic of Uganda provides for a decentralised system of local government.

### 2.2 Main legislative texts

The main legislation is the Local Governments Act 1997<sup>49.2b</sup> (Cap. 243).

### 2.3 Proposed legislative changes

No proposed legislative changes known.

### 2.4 National urban policy

The Ministry of Local Government (MLG) is currently developing the Uganda National Urban Policy<sup>49.2c</sup> in partnership with ULGA (see Section 6), Cities Alliance and other partners. The agreed strategic urban plan contains an agreed national vision and actionable directions to guide urban investment for the next 15 years.

## 3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### 3.1 Local government within the state

In urban settings, there are city, municipal, division/town, ward and cell councils. In rural areas, there are district councils, counties (which are administrative units without a council), sub-county councils, parish councils and village councils.

### 3.2 Ministerial oversight

The Ministry of Local Government<sup>49.3d</sup> (MLG), empowered through the Local Governments Act 1997 (Cap. 243), is responsible for formulating and supervising national policy and legislation on local government. The minister responsible for local governments, the resident district commissioner (RDC), and the inspector general of government (IGG) – who is broadly responsible for the elimination of corruption and abuse of office in the public sector – have powers to intervene in the activities of local government if an allegation of misconduct is raised. The IGG has direct powers to intervene, but the minister and RDC can only conduct investigations through instigating an inquiry, convening a meeting of the council in question or calling on other appropriate bodies to investigate (eg the auditor general or the IGG secretariat). In extreme cases the process may escalate all the way up to the president, who may assume executive powers over the council as provided for in the Local Governments Act 1997 (Cap. 243).

### 3.3 Council types

Since 2002 there have been a number of significant structural reforms in the local government sector, which have resulted in an increase in the total number of district councils from 56 to 111, and one additional city authority.

#### 3.3.1 Rural councils

3.3.1.1 A district council is the planning authority in a given district and is made up of an executive committee composed of chairperson, vice-chairperson and a maximum of three secretaries nominated from amongst the councillors. One secretary is responsible for health and children's welfare.



## KEY FACTS

### POPULATION (2018 estimate):

38,823,100

### AREA (UN 2006):

241,550 sq km

### CAPITAL:

Kampala

### CURRENCY:

Ugandan shilling (UGX)

### HEAD OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT:

President Yoweri Museveni

### FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

republic

### PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM:

unicameral

### STATE STRUCTURE:

unitary

### LANGUAGES:

English (official), Swahili (recognised)

### NATIONAL ELECTIONS:

last: Feb 2016, turnout: 67.1%; next: 2021

### WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT (2016):

34.3%

### LOCAL ELECTIONS:

last: 2015, turnout: na; next: 2021

### WOMEN COUNCILLORS: (2015)

48.3%

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE as a percentage of total government expenditure 2013/14:

15.7%

**Table 49.1a Distribution of councils and population as of Jan 2018**

Region	District	City	Municipal	Division	Ward	Cell	Town	Sub-county (admin)	Parish	Village	Population (2014 Census)	Population (2017 est.)	% rural (2014)
Central	24	1	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	9,579,119	10,744,400	na
Eastern	33	0	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	9,094,960	10,127,900	na
Northern*	33	0	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	7,243,379	8,055,400	na
Western	31	0	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	8,939,355	9,895,400	na
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>1,195</b>	<b>7,468</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>34,856,813</b>	<b>38,823,100</b>	<b>81.6</b>

Source: MLG factsheet 2017<sup>49.3a</sup> and 2014 Census<sup>49.3a</sup> \*The Northern region includes 12,718 persons identified separately in the Census as living in conflict areas. \*\* The rural population percentage cited in the 2014 Census includes populations living in town boards. \*\*\* In September 2015, the Ugandan Parliament created 23 new districts, to be phased in over the next four years on top of the 111.

The district council can establish as many standing committees as there are secretaries on its executive committee. A typical structure would include standing committees for education, finance, health and welfare, public works and sanitation. The chairperson is the political head of the council and is directly elected by the people in the district for a term of five years. A speaker is elected during the first council meeting to preside over meetings. In each district the executive and standing committees report to the full council. The executive committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of both council programmes and NGO activities. It initiates and formulates policies, which are put before the full council for approval. Councils may delegate a range of powers to the executive committee. All members of the executive committee work full-time for the council. An MP may attend meetings of any tier of local government in his/her constituency as an ex-officio member. Higher-tier councils are empowered to give lower-tier councils guidance on carrying out their functions. The higher-tier councils are also required to settle disputes between lower councils, should they arise. The district councils may devolve certain functions to lower levels of local government.

**3.3.1.2 The county administrative unit**, which is staffed by civil servants, assists the district council in executing and/or coordinating the business of sub-county councils. Hence it monitors implementation of programmes and resolves disputes within its area of jurisdiction.

**3.3.1.3 Sub-county councils** are structured as exact replicas of the district councils. The democratic structure and functions are the same but their area of jurisdiction is smaller. Apart from the chairperson, executive committee members at this level are not required to be full-time. Sub-county councils are responsible for service delivery and local economic development within their areas.

**3.3.1.4 Parish councils** are required to have executive committees comprising a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, a general secretary and secretaries for information, education, security, finance, production and environmental protection. There is also a disabled persons' council, a youth council and a women's council whose respective chairs are appointed as secretaries for their representative group to the main council. Parishes are responsible for monitoring service delivery at that level.

**3.3.1.5 Village councils:** at the village level all citizens 18 years and over are members of the council. The structure of the council is similar to that of the parishes.

**3.3.2 Urban councils**

**3.3.2.1 A city council** is the planning authority in a given city and is made up of an executive committee composed of a mayor, deputy mayor and up to three secretaries nominated from amongst the councillors. One secretary is responsible for health and children's welfare. The city council can establish as many standing committees as there are secretaries on its executive committee. A typical structure would include standing committees for education, finance, health and welfare, public works and sanitation. The mayor is the political head of the council and is directly elected by the people in the city for a term of five years. A speaker is elected during the first council meeting to preside over meetings. In each city the executive and standing committees report to the full council. The executive committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of both council programmes and NGO activities.

**3.3.2.2 Municipal councils** are administrative units within the local government structure, composed of executive committees drawn from all divisions in the area. They are required to have a mayor and a deputy mayor, but there is no legal requirement for an executive committee.

The municipal council's role is to monitor implementation of programmes and resolve disputes within its area of jurisdiction.

**3.3.2.3 Division councils** are structured as exact replicas of district councils. The democratic structure and functions are the same but their area of jurisdiction is smaller. Apart from the chairperson, executive committee members at this level are not required to be full-time. Division councils are responsible for service delivery and local economic development within their areas.

**3.3.2.4 Ward councils** are required to have executive committees comprising a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, a general secretary and secretaries for information, education, security, finance, production, and environmental protection. There is also a disabled persons' council, a youth council and a women's council whose respective chairs are appointed as secretaries for their representative group to the main council. Parishes are responsible for monitoring service delivery at that level.

**3.3.2.5 Cell councils:** at the cell level all citizens 18 years and over are members of the council. The structure of the council is similar to that of a ward.

**4. ELECTIONS**

**4.1 Recent local elections**

Local government elections were last held in 2015.<sup>49.4a</sup> Parish and village council elections were not conducted at that time.

**4.2 Voting system**

Local government elections are held every five years. Candidates are elected on a party ticket. Only Ugandan citizens resident in a local government area for more than four months and aged 18 years or over are eligible to vote. In addition to the universally elected councillors, two more councillors, at


**Table 49.1b Women councillors and mayors following the last three local elections**

Election	2005		2010		2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Councillors						
<b>Female councillors</b>	na	na	na	na	<b>12,626</b>	<b>48.3</b>
Male councillors	na	na	na	na	13,489	51.7
<b>Total councillors</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26,115</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Chairpersons						
<b>Female chairpersons</b>	na	na	na	na	<b>16</b>	<b>1.0</b>
Male chairpersons	na	na	na	na	1,514	99.0
<b>Total chairpersons</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,530</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: MLG factsheet 2017<sup>49,50</sup>

least one of whom must be a woman, are directly elected by members of their respective local organisations to represent youth, disabled and older people's groups. Elections to the lower levels of the local government structure - village and parish - are conducted by secret ballot.

#### 4.3 Elected representatives

Elected representatives are generally nominated by their political party although there are a few independent representatives. For district councils the sub-counties serve as electoral areas. In a typical district comprising 12 sub-counties and one town council, the district council will comprise the following: the directly elected district chairperson, and one directly elected councillor for each of the 12 sub-counties and the town council (see 4.2 above).

#### 4.4 Women's representation

At least one-third of all councillors must be female.

### 5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

#### 5.1 Legal requirement

Under Section 35(3) of the Local Governments Act 1997 (Cap. 243), district councils are mandated to prepare a comprehensive and integrated development plan incorporating plans of sub-counties and municipal councils, for submission to the national planning authority. Sub-counties and municipal councils must prepare plans incorporating the plans of parish/ward councils, and village/cell councils in their respective areas of jurisdiction. Coordination is undertaken by the district technical planning committee and by the sub-county planning and budget desks at lower local government levels, and is based in the planning unit within the MLG. The plans are submitted to their respective councils for consideration in accordance with Section 37(4) of the Local Governments Act.

#### 5.2 Implementation

Communities are mobilised to form groups, for instance to access credit from village banks. In water projects, user committees are formed to take responsibility for the supply system and to mobilise other community members to contribute to the maintenance of the water points. With funding from the World Bank, the MLG has created a community-driven development fund through which a local community group can receive a grant of around US\$2,500 for any project of their choice where the community meets all the following criteria:

- the households concerned have immunised their children below five years of age
- they have a rack for drying their utensils
- they have a latrine at a recommended healthy distance from the house
- all their school-age children are in school.

Four types of communities are recognised for the purposes of the fund: geographical (found in the same location); livelihood-based (living off the same source of livelihood); productive (whose members participate in a particular trade); and needs-based (formed around a common interest). This has since been mainstreamed into the budgeting framework.

#### 5.3 ICT use in citizen engagement

ICT facilities are currently not available for community involvement in local decision-making. As part of the national e-government strategy, however, a new system of local government administration, known as the Districts Information Portal, has been implemented. This provides profiles of each district including contact details, economic activity and news. Further details can be found in Section 9.6.

### 6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

There are two associations of local government, the Uganda Local Government Association (ULGA)<sup>49,6</sup> and the Urban Authorities Association of Uganda (UAAU). The objectives of these associations are to advocate for the interests of local government and to lobby for their inclusion in decision-making at the national level. In addition districts are permitted to cooperate on projects and to form secretariats or trust funds for cooperation on specified activities. There is a general feeling that the two associations should be merged to make a stronger association, given the similarity of their objectives. Negotiations between the two associations and stakeholders are ongoing.

### 7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

In each district there is a resident district commissioner (RDC) appointed by the president, whose role is to represent national government and to coordinate the administration of government services in the area. The RDC is the main contact between the local and national government systems. At the lowest ward/village level the RDC will provide support for basic computer systems such as simple spreadsheets to maintain records for planning and management purposes. The government has also adopted the electronic funds transfer system for payments within government, including local governments. The payment of funds in many local governments, especially those on the government's integrated financial management system, is now effected electronically and instantaneously. This is part of a bid to monitor payments and to minimise fraud, which has previously occurred with paper-based payment systems. The local government associations and the MLG meet regularly through the associations' quarterly meetings and the Joint Annual Review of Decentralisation (JARD). JARD is a national forum of stakeholders who are responsible for service delivery, monitoring and technical guidance at local government level.

### 8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

The monitoring of local government activities is done at every level, from the village to the district and then up to the national government. Reports from the Local Government Public Accounts are submitted to the minister responsible for local government, who lays them before parliament.

### 9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

#### 9.1 Local government expenditure

Local government expenditure in 2013/14 was approximately 15.7% of total government expenditure - see table 49.2b.

**Table 49.2a Aggregate income and expenditure for local government 2014/15**

Income	UGXm	Expenditure	UGXm
<b>Centre-local transfers</b>		<b>Administration</b>	
Unconditional grants	82.57	Staff	na
Equalisation grants	3.60	Property	na
Conditional grants	2,274.02	Other	na
<b>Locally raised revenue</b>		<b>Services</b>	
Property taxes	na	Water	na
Licences and fees	na	Road maintenance	na
Other	na	Other	na
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>2306.19</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>-2306.19</b>

Source: MLG communication with CLGF

**9.2 Locally raised revenue**

Local governments in Uganda can levy taxes and receive non-tax revenue as prescribed by parliament. Over the years, government has made alterations to the types of taxes, with the latest introductions into the system being a local service tax and a hotel tax. In rural areas, the district councils set taxes and the sub-county councils collect tax and non-tax revenues on behalf of the various tiers of local government. In urban areas the municipal town councils set their own taxes, which are then collected by divisions of the city council and by town councils. Locally raised revenue is, by law, shared between district councils (35%) and sub-county councils (65%). In the city and municipal councils, the divisions retain 50% and remit the other 50% to the higher local government. On a monthly basis, the city and municipal authorities are required to send back a minimum of 30% of what they receive from divisions, based on a prescribed formula which takes into account population, school-going age and land area. The sub-county and town councils are required by law to send 25% and 10% of the revenue to villages and wards respectively.

**9.3 Transfers**

The Local Government Finance Commission (LGFC) advises the president on the financial position and needs of local government bodies.

It is made up of seven members, four of whom are nominated by local governments. The commission advises on all matters concerning the distribution of revenue between national and local government, and the allocation made to each local government out of the consolidated fund. There are three forms of grants made by national government to local government: a conditional grant, an unconditional grant, and an equalisation grant.

**9.4 Loans**

No information is available.

**9.5 Local authority staff**

The payroll for district and municipal government staff is decentralised and managed by the relevant local governments. The Ministry of Public Service has adopted the 'straight-through processing' (STP) system for all employees' salaries. The monthly salary is now directly credited to the employee's bank account.

**9.6 Systems of financial management**

A key aim of the Districts Information Portal (described in Section 5.3) is to improve the public financial management systems of all local governments through automation, in a systematic and phased manner. The first phase is to automate the first tier of government, starting with financial management systems.

**Table 48.2b Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure 2014/15**

	2014/15 US\$
Total government expenditure	15,054
Total local government expenditure	2,360
<b>Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure</b>	<b>15.7%</b>

Source: Compiled by CLGF from table 2.1 and the budget statement estimates 2014/15<sup>49,9</sup>

To date the government has introduced an integrated financial management system in 22 district councils, one city and five city division councils. Second and lower tiers of local government have started to receive support for implementing simpler complementary systems.

**10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY**

**10.1 Overview of local government service delivery**

The second schedule of the Local Governments Act 1997 lists the functions that must remain with national government, but also provides a list of functions to be carried out by the districts and other local councils – functions which may or may not be devolved to lower levels of local government. Districts are responsible for the provision of education services, although some education services may be devolved to the lower councils. Education policy remains with national government. The same is true for social welfare, environmental services and public sanitation. Public health is the responsibility of the districts, but they are also strongly urged to devolve primary care and health protection to the lower councils. Responsibility for transport and environmental protection is shared between national and local government, and water supply, electricity, trade and industry remain under national government. Local economic development is the responsibility of the districts and lower tiers of government; for example the provision of marketplaces.

**10.2 ICT use in service delivery**

No information is available.

**10.3 The role of local government in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The importance of national ownership is an idea that influenced the country's long-term development plan, Uganda Vision 2040, which outlines the ambition to become a middle-income country by the year 2040. A series of five-year National Development Plans (NDPs) will set medium-term strategic direction, development priorities, and implementation strategies for Uganda Vision 2040. From the beginning of the post-2015 process, alignment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) with national planning has been a key concern. The Second National Development Plan was launched in June 2015, after an exceptionally collaborative process with an eye towards integrating the SDGs from the start.



**Annex 49a Summary of service provision in different spheres of government in Uganda**

Services	Delivering authority				Remarks
	National government	Districts	Urban councils	Village and community councils	
<b>GENERAL ADMINISTRATION</b>					
Police	■				
Fire protection		■	■		
Civil protection	■	■			
Criminal justice	■	■			
Civil status register		■			
Statistical office		■			
Electoral register	■				
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
Pre-school (kindergarten and nursery)		■	■	■	
Primary		■			
Secondary		■			
Vocational and technical		■			
Higher education		■			
Adult education					
<b>SOCIAL WELFARE</b>					
Family welfare services		■			
Welfare homes		■			
Social security		■			
<b>PUBLIC HEALTH</b>					
Primary care		■	■	■	
Hospitals		■	■	■	
Health protection		■	■	■	
<b>HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING</b>					
Housing					
Town planning		■			
Regional planning		■			
<b>TRANSPORT</b>					
Roads	■	■			
Transport		■			
Urban roads					
Urban rail					
Ports	■				
Airports	■				
<b>ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION</b>					
Water and sanitation		■			
Refuse collection and disposal		■			
Cemeteries and crematoria		■			
Slaughterhouses		■			
Environmental protection			■		
Consumer protection		■			
<b>CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS</b>					
Theatres and concerts		■			
Museums and libraries		■			
Parks and open spaces		■	■	■	
Sports and leisure facilities		■			
Religious facilities					
<b>UTILITIES</b>					
Gas services					
District heating					
Water supply	■	■			
Electricity	■				
<b>ECONOMIC</b>					
Agriculture, forests and fisheries		■	■	■	
Local economic development/promotion		■	■	■	
Trade and industry	■				
Tourism		■			

■ sole responsibility service ■ joint responsibility service ■ discretionary service