



Uganda Local Governments Association (ULGA)

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Corporate Strategic Plan for July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2010

Approved by ULGA AGM, Held at Gulu,

On Friday 19th January 2007

MAP OF DISTRICTS OF UGANDA

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List of Abbreviations

AGM	Annual General Meeting (of ULGA)
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CB	Capacity Building
CG	Central Government
CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CSO/NGO	Civil Society Organisation/Non-Governmental Organisation
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DCI	Development Co-operation of Ireland
DDPG	Decentralisation Development Partners Group
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DPSF	Decentralisation Policy Strategic Framework
DSWG	Decentralisation Sector Working Group
EALGA	East African Local Governments Association
NEC	National Executive Committee (of ULGA)
EU/EC	European Union/European Commission
FDS	Fiscal Decentralisation Strategy
GoU	The Government of Uganda
HRD	Human Resource Development
IDP	Internally Displaced People's (Camps)
JARD	Joint Annual Review of Decentralisation
LED	Local Economic Development
LG	Local Government
LGBC	Local Government Budget Committee
LGDK	Local Government Denmark, (the national association of local authorities in Denmark)
LGFC	Local Government Finance Commission
LGROC	Local Government Releases and Operations Committee
LGSIP	Local Government Sector Investment Plan
MOFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MOLG	Ministry of Local Government
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organisation

NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PEAP/PAF	Poverty Eradication Action Plan/Poverty Action Fund
PMA	Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture
PPA	Priority Programme Areas
PRDP	Peace Recovery and Development Plan (for Northern Uganda)
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SWG	Sector Working Group
TSU	Technical Support Unit
UAAU	Urban Authorities Association of Uganda
UCLGA	United Cities and LGs (World and Continental Association of LGs)
ULGA	Uganda Local Governments Association
UNAT	ULGA Negotiation and Advocacy Team
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
USAID/SDU	United States Agency for International Development/Support to Decentralisation in Uganda
WB	World Bank

Foreword

This Corporate Strategic Plan is the third in the lifetime of ULGA. The plan departs from the achievements and remaining challenges of the previous strategic plan 2003-2006 but takes note of the changing political environment.

The purpose of the plan is to guide the work of ULGA's political institutions – the AGM, the NEC, the standing committees, the UNAT and the secretariat by defining the key priority areas.

The Association is faced with numerous challenges and problems that cannot all be solved simultaneously and on the basis of this it is necessary to focus the limited resources of ULGA on some areas of key importance.

The implementation of the plan will be subject to reporting annually to the AGM and in case the policy environment changes substantially it may be necessary to change priorities and revise the plan. The plan is not a one for all fixed document but can be adapted to address the changing needs under the guidance of the AGM.

The Corporate Strategic Plan 2007-2010 has the full endorsement of the Local Governments of Uganda who form the Association membership. The Plan places emphasis on the role and mandate of ULGA as an Association in uniting and strengthening the Local Governments, providing them Association member services and advocating for strengthening of the policy of decentralisation in Uganda.

It is my sincere hope that it will prove to be a useful instrument for strengthening both ULGA and the members. This is our unique contribution to building good governance, local democracy and development.

I therefore appeal to all the Local Governments, the Government – particularly MoLG, LGFC, MoPS, MoPFED and D-SWG, plus our development partners in the DDPG, civil society and the general public to support ULGA and enable us achieve these noble objectives for the betterment of our society.

John Wycliffe Karazarwe
ULGA PRESIDENT

Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the Local Government Association of Denmark (LGDK), particularly Consultants Holger Pyndt and Phillip Bottern who gave technical assistance in reviewing the ULGA Corporate Strategic Plan. Thanks too to all stakeholders who were consulted in the plan review process.

ULGA appreciates the support of Danida, DFID, EC, UN-Habitat, SNV and [I@mak](#) towards its development programmes. Success of this Corporate Plan shall also depend greatly on the assistance of the Development Agencies of Austria, Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland and Denmark, plus other members of the DDPG. We are grateful to all our partners for their support.

The most important stakeholders to ULGA are the Local Governments at District, Urban and Subcounty levels, who comprise the Associations membership. We thank them all for their contributions. They have made ULGA what it is.

Together we shall continue to build ULGA into a strong Association able to make enviable strides on the path to achieving good local governance in Uganda.

Magyezi Raphael
SECRETARY GENERAL

1. Formation, Objectives and Structure of ULGA

1.1 Formation and Legal Status

Uganda Local Governments Association was established as Uganda Local Authorities Association in 1994. It changed name to Uganda Local Governments Association (ULGA) in 2004. It currently has 79 districts and 214 sub-counties, urban divisions and town councils (LC 3 level) as members. Kampala City is a member of ULGA as the only City Council in Uganda.

ULGA is duly registered with the Registrar of Companies as a legal not for profit organisation, whose members are the LGs of Uganda.

Much as ULGA is not an organ of Government, the role of the Association is implied and recognised by the State in a number of arrangements. These include:

- Appointment of the LGFC. The Association is required under the Law to nominate members for appointment by His Excellency the President on to the LGFC. There is no other feasible way that Local Governments would do this function without the Association.
- Sector Negotiations on the Conditional Grants. The Association is required to set up a negotiating team to agree with the Sector Ministries on the programmes and conditionalities of the grants. The Association has the mandate and confidence of the Local Governments to do this on their behalf.
- Decentralisation Policy Strategic Framework. The Association's role is highlighted both in the DPSF and LOGSIP which is the Government approved arrangement for decentralisation policy and its implementation in Uganda.
- Representation at National Fora. The Association is tasked to represent the Local Governments and their interests at various national fora, which are legal and mandatory. These include the NUSAF, NARO, SWGs, PMA, etc... These help to emphasise the legal obligations of ULGA.

1.2 Mission Statement and Objectives

1.2.1 Mission Statement

The mission of ULGA is to unite all local governments and to build democratic and accountable local governments capable of delivering efficient and sustainable public services.

1.2.2 Objectives

With this Mission Statement the objectives of ULGA are:

- To unite Local Governments and provide a common voice to represent the interests of members
- To build strong, responsible Local Governments that are capable of delivering services to the population
- To cooperate as partners with Central Government in order to promote decentralisation as an efficient means to fight and eradicate poverty

- To develop an accountable and transparent Local Government System that is based upon modern management practises, good governance and value for money
- To stimulate cooperation and exchange of experience between Local Governments as a means of enhancing efficiency, transparency and local participation

1.3 The Annual General Meeting

Every year, ULGA holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of all Members. The AGM is the highest policy organ of the Association. The members are represented at the General Meeting by the Chairperson of the District Council, the Speaker and the CAO. The AGM therefore includes:

- All chairpersons of district councils
- All district speakers
- All CAOs
- 2 representatives from Sub-counties per region (8 in total)

1.4 The National Executive Committee

Every two (2) years, the AGM elects a National Executive Committee (NEC) that consists of 14 members::

- A President
- A Vice-President
- 4 regional chairpersons
- 4 CAOs to represent their respective regions
- 4 Speakers to represent their respective regions

1.5 Standing Committees

ULGA has organised 5 Standing committees:

- Finance and Management Committee
- Training and Capacity Building Committee
- Peace, human rights and Conflict Resolution Committee
- HIV/AIDS, Gender, Disability and Environment Committee
- International relations and publicity committee

1.6 Regional structure

ULGA has a structure with 4 regions from which the members of the EC are elected. Regional “offices” (not buildings) have to some extent been established in the regions with the purpose of facilitating ULGA’s regional representation, flow of information from members to the headquarter and training.

1.7 ULGA Negotiation and Advocacy Team (UNAT)

ULGA has a negotiation and advocacy team, which includes members outside the NEC. Urban councils and lower local government representatives in particular are part of the UNAT in order to enhance articulation of issues affecting all levels of local governments. The UNAT is primarily responsible for the annual negotiations on the conditional grants with the line ministries but it may also be activated for other fields of advocacy and negotiation.

The 14 members comprise:

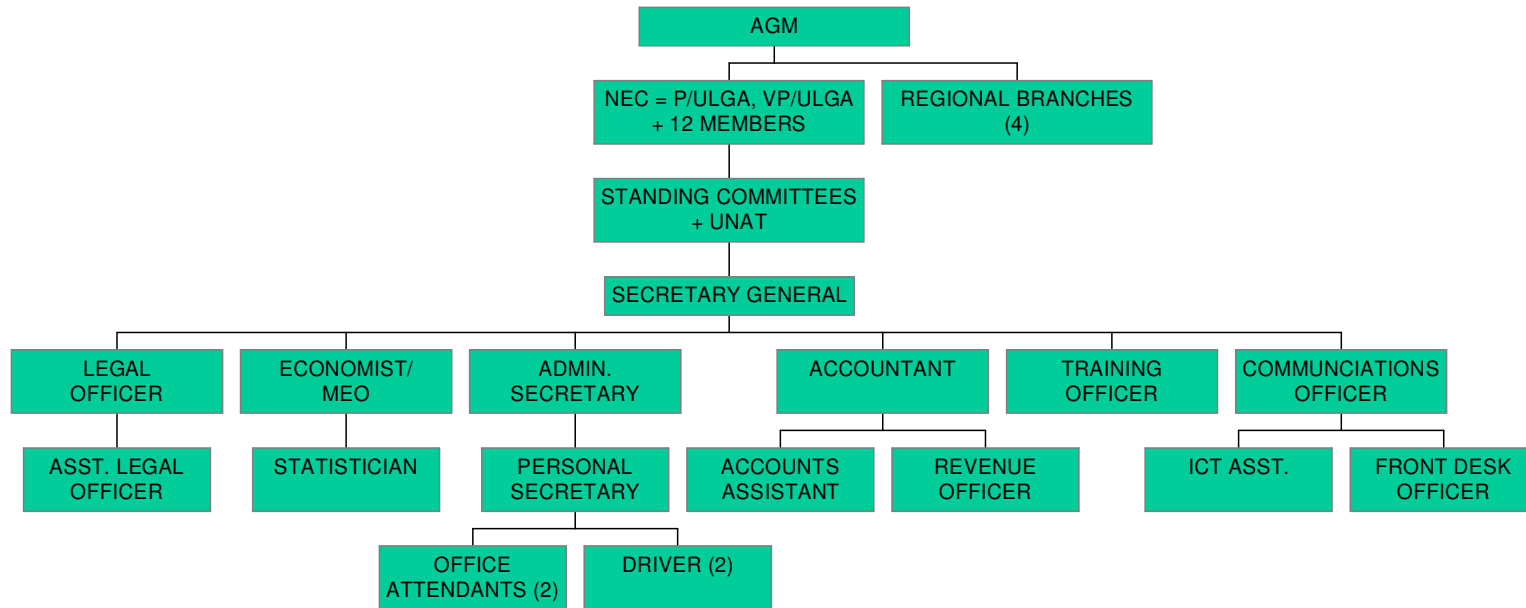
- President ULGA (chair)
- Chairperson UAAU (co-chair)
- Vice President ULGA (member)
- Vice-Chairperson UAAU (member)
- Chairperson of ULGA's Finance Committee (member)
- Honorable Secretary UAAU (member)
- Chairperson Speakers' Association (member)
- Chairperson CAO's Association (member)
- Chairperson Town Clerks' Association (member)
- Representative of Town Councils (member)
- Chairperson, Urban Divisions' Association (member)
- Representative of Sub-counties (member)
- Chairperson of CFOs in Districts (member)
- Chairperson of CFOs in Urban areas (member)

1.8 The Secretariat

The National Secretariat of ULGA has since 1995 been housed in Kampala in NIC Building, 3 Pilkington Road. Since October 2006, however, ULGA secured its own building at plot 136 Najjanankumbi, Entebbe road, Kampala. This was possible with the support of DFID, Danida and contributions from the member local governments. It currently has 18 staff members, headed by the Secretary General. The operations of the secretariat are supported by various development partners, including DANIDA since 1998, but recently also DFID, the EU and I@mak.

The ULGA Secretariat has 6 departments: Economics, Legal, Training, Communication, Administration and Accounts.

1.9 ULGA ORGANOGRAM



2. ULGA's Corporate Strategic Plan 2003-2006

2.1 Background to the Strategic Plan

As a means to implementing the mission, ULGA for the period 2003-2006 has been working according to a Strategic Plan with focus on 3 areas:

- To ensure local government unity and strength
- To provide more and better services to the members
- To increase the influence on Government's policy and legislation

During this period some progress has been made but much still needs to be done and this in combination with the recent developments and challenges provide the basis for deciding upon the major priorities of ULGA for the period 2007-2010.

2.2 Key achievements of 2003-2005

The membership has increased so that ULGA has managed to include all new districts in the association. At the same time the membership of sub-counties, urban divisions and town councils has almost quadrupled during the period to reach 214 at the end of June 2006.

Membership payments also increased fundamentally in the beginning of the period to reach a peak of 216 mill. U.Sh. in 2003/04. Due to the continued deterioration of local government revenues and final elimination of the G-tax the membership payments have since dropped significantly to 143 mill. in 2004/2005 and 112 mill. in 2005/2006.

A fundamental success has been the introduction of the annual negotiations with line ministries about the conditional grants, chaired by the LGFC. This has provided ULGA with a formidable platform for direct dialogue with and influencing of the line ministries that has been put to good use. The local governments also managed to form a common stand in these negotiations and the UNAT has taken on the negotiation role in a strong way.

ULGA has also been able to make professional presentation on the analysis of the draft national annual budget and this has had great impact on the negotiations and advocacy in parliament, with regard to local government financing.

The development and approval of the Charter on Accountability and Ethical code of conduct for Local Governments is another major achievement that should be marketed more aggressively among members and stakeholders, including Parliament and the Development Partners.

ULGA has also been able to maintain almost all "key actors" within the LG family within one umbrella – the Chairpersons, the CAOs, the CFOs, the Town Clerks, the Speakers, the division councils, the sub-county councils. This is a major achievement that should not be underestimated. In a period of re-centralisation of the CAOs and Town Clerks, the value of having

these vital staff categories within the leadership of ULGA is instrumental. If this were not the case, the LG association might have been significantly weakened.

ULGA has also been able to attract significant donor funding so that the total resource envelope of ULGA annually has been approximately 1.5 bill U.Sh. This has provided ULGA with a possibility to implement a broad variety of programmes and activities in training, legal services, communication, economics, research and development.

Another achievement is the ability, although very limited, to earn income from consultancies. This boosts staff development and provides ULGA with a broadened revenue base.

Provision of specific services to the members has generally been fairly weak, but important assistance has been provided within conflict management and reconciliation between members, legal advice to limit damages from illegal conduct in local governments. Training of councillors and staff in key areas has also been done.

Finally, the introduction of JARD fulfils one of the goals of the last plan – to ensure that the progress of decentralisation in Uganda is regularly measured and discussed. This is not only thanks to ULGA's work but reflects also a good cooperation and understanding with the development partners, LGFC and MOLG. The JARD provides a good platform for consultation with members on vital issues through the annual regional conferences and a venue for presentation of policy statements and demands to the future development of decentralisation.

The international commitment of ULGA has also been manifested by the involvement in UCLGA, EALGA and the CLGF. This outlook is vital for ULGA to expose local governments to international best practice and co-operation in local government management.

2.3 Outstanding Challenges of 2003-2006

ULGA encountered a number of challenges during the past plan period: re-centralisation of the CAOs, abolition of Tender Boards, scrapping of the G-tax, and introduction of a new regional tier of government. In view of the tendency to recentralise, amidst the reintroduction of the multi-party system and creation of new districts, ULGA must continue to ask itself how it could manage the changing environment better.

In general, it seems that recentralisation trends prevail in these years because there is apparent inability to exercise patience for new solutions to gain root. Service delivery priorities seem to attract less attention in the reform process and suffer from an increased administrative burden on the system.

ULGA's advocacy has generally been put to test. Apart from the important area of LG finance where platforms of influence exist – the LGFC, the LGBC and the annual negotiations about the conditional grants – it has been difficult for ULGA to manifest itself and gain significant influence when important laws are formulated or changed and national policies elaborated.

ULGA's approach has generally been said to be rather timid and not sufficiently substantiated by research and analysis, and results presented too late to gain influence.

On the basis of this, the advocacy work needs strengthening. ULGA needs to become much better in networking, Partnerships must be expanded to forge strategic alliances to influence government policy and legislation.

Where achievements have been made these have not been disseminated in an optimal way and the communication has faltered.

The introduction of a multi-party political system presents specific challenges for ULGA. Over and above harmonising the different viewpoints of different types of districts, sub-counties, cities, towns and urban divisions as well as professional staff organisations, ULGA will in future have to become and always stay a party-political neutral institution, although governed by party-political representatives – cross-cutting local government viewpoints will have to prevail over party-political ideological statements. An accommodating model for interaction with the political parties will also have to be found.

LGDP II provided a good platform for expansion of ULGA's engagement within training and capacity building of its members. ULGA became pre-qualified as training provider and delivered a number of training courses but has now decided to focus more on monitoring and evaluation in order to assist members with identification of training needs and evaluation of the quality of the training delivered to them by the various institutions.

Training and capacity building has not really reached the sub-county level due to the lack of mobilisation of the District Resource Pools. ULGA has an important role to play here.

ULGA's own resource base has been severely weakened due to the deterioration of LG own income sources. A number of measures can alleviate the situation, most important of which is to exploit to full potential the remaining tax sources, such as tax on rent in urban areas, as government makes effort to find alternative own income sources to the G-tax. ULGA may also need to start delivering an increased number of services to the members for pay and in general focus more on income generating activities. This requires a strong consultancy unit.

The inadequacy of funding in districts and lower local governments is also a great challenge for ULGA in itself as this may lead to actions that are contrary to ethical behaviour and good governance rules and that may spill back on ULGA – "no association is stronger than its weakest member".

The dependence on the development partners is still too big as these provide approximately 88% of the budget of ULGA. A more varied and broader base of financing is important. It is necessary that ULGA increases its own local revenues to ensure its future sustainability, with the support of the development partners.

It is equally important to continue the close cooperation between the district and urban authorities in the hope of an eventual merger with UAAU, as the weight of arguments increases when all different types of LGs are represented effectively.

2.4 Key opportunities

The new political parties present opportunities for ULGA to present its policies and strategies. If ULGA's positions are found acceptable by the political parties this may increase the Association's lobby opportunities in Parliament.

Parliament seems to have an increasing number of members with a basis in local government as chairmen, speakers, councillors, CAOs etc., including the former President of ULGA. This should make networking with Parliament easier for ULGA.

The local government election in 2006 brought many new and strong members into ULGA NEC being very enthusiastic and committed. They may be used to gain inroads into the different interest groups in local governments (youth, women, disability, political ideology etc) and develop a local government platform within these.

The support from the side of the development partners in relation to decentralisation is strong and both ULGA as institution and the members benefit from this. The JARD is an instrument that can be used to keep focus on and measure the continued strengthening of decentralisation and local governance.

ULGA has beneficial working relationship with the Civil Society Organisations, including the National NGO Forum, The DENIVA (Development Network of Indigenous Organisations) and others. The Association is able to use its large network to enhance the advocacy and negotiation for good local governance and better service delivery.

His Excellency, the President of Uganda is the Patron of ULGA. The Association's Trustees are also persons of high calibre in this country. This may be used strategically to promote key issues within decentralisation.

ULGA as an institution is well over "child diseases" and has developed various systems and procedures for its operations that enhances its stability. A new house has been acquired that will ease the housing costs and provide new possibilities, and the staff in the secretariat are a mix of experienced experts and new strong recruits. These are all significant opportunities for ULGA to take advantage of and quickly move ahead.

3. Recent developments within the national decentralisation strategy and emerging challenges

3.1 Decentralisation Policy Strategic Framework

The MoLG has developed a DPSF, with the theme: “To fundamentally transform society by empowering citizens to take charge of their development agenda so as to improve their livelihood”.

The DPSF provides a coherent, comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to implementation of decentralisation. It should therefore help stakeholders to consolidate and deepen decentralisation on policy. It establishes the rationale, objectives and principles of decentralisation and recognises the cardinal role of LGs in poverty eradication and implementation of the PEAP. A critical assumption of the DPSF is that LGs have adequate human, financial and material capacity to deliver the decentralised services and that they are able to untie for their own efficiency and effectiveness. This forms a strong basis for ULGA and its mandate.

ULGA’s role is highlighted in the DPSF in the attainment of various strategic actions including strengthening political capacity, building accountable LGs, improving revenues of LGs, promoting ethics in LG management and integrating crosscutting issues in LG services. As a member of the DSWG, ULGA is expected, among others to:

- Advocate for LGs and for effective implementation of decentralisation.
- Bring to the attention of the DSWG issues of concern to LGs and convey decisions of the DSWG to LGs.

3.2 Local Government Sector Investment Plan (LGSIP)

The LGSIP has been developed with the following objectives:

- a) To provide a single point of reference for mobilising resources for implementation of the decentralisation policy within the context of the PEAP
- b) To ensure that resources are channelled to the core programmes and activities to support implementation of the decentralisation policy within MTEF
- c) To ensure coordinated and effective delivery of services at local level

The LGSIP is an output of the JARD 2004 and 2005 and it will be updated as the case arises depending on ongoing policy, structural or regulatory reforms.

To enhance coordination, coherence, efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of the LGSIP, a Decentralisation Sector Working Group (DSWG) has been constituted with membership from MOLG (Chair), Line Ministries, MoFPED, OPM, ULGA, LGFC and the DDPG and representatives of CSOs/Private Sector.

The DSWG has an advisory role to the Public Sector Management Group in order to articulate issues relevant to implementation of decentralisation.¹

Without any doubt, the LGSIP will become the key future vehicle for decentralisation and ULGA must assert its influence on implementation of LOGSIP/DPSF and ensure active involvement in the LOGSIP activities.

3.3 Key institutions and programmes

MOLG is the fundamental partner in central government. MOLG has the primary responsibility for implementation of decentralisation in Uganda. As decentralisation is implemented through a sector wide approach where line ministries develop their respective sector policies, MOLG has the mandate to play an oversight, coordinating and supportive role to ensure that the different sector policies are not contradictory to the process of decentralisation and the local governments comply with statutory requirements and adhere to national policies and standards.

ULGA is yet to develop permanent interaction fora with MOLG and relations have to go beyond personalities and get entrenched in the institutionalised organs.

As an instrument of implementation of the FDS, a Local Government Budget Committee (LGBC) chaired by the Local Government Finance Commission is established with active participation of ULGA. As well, a Local Government Releases and Operations Committee (LGROC) chaired by MOFPED is established, where ULGA has observer status.

The activity areas of the LGBC are:

- The negotiation and agreement of allocation formulae and grant conditions between sector ministries and local governments
- The identification of issues for inclusion in the National Budget Framework Paper from analysis of Local Government Budget Framework Papers
- Overseeing the performance of the Comprehensive Local Government Assessments
- Overseeing the coordination of Local Government Capacity building by donors, CG and LGs
- Overseeing the coordination of donor support to Local Governments/Decentralisation

The existence of the Local Government Finance Commission (LGFC) is also a positive element in the decentralisation process. It advises the President and LGs on state transfer systems and local revenue generation and 4 of the 7 members of the LGFC are nominated by ULGA and UAAU. LGFC has been active since 1998 and a very close cooperation exists between ULGA and LGFC.

Local Governments are also at the forefront in implementing the Government policy of Poverty Eradication and economic recovery. PEAP, PAF and the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture and all sector strategic plans are being actualised through the various programmes of Local Governments. Evidence on the ground shows that a lot of infrastructure has been put up and

¹ MOLG, The Local Government Sector Investment Plan (LGSIP) 2006-2016, Final, November 2006

maintained, including feeder, urban and community access roads, health units, primary and secondary schools, rural and urban water supplies, agriculture extension and demonstration farms, administrative buildings, equipment and furniture. All this demonstrates the potential efficacy of the decentralisation policy.

Different development partners are implementing various programmes to enhance decentralisation. EU has launched a massive programme Support to Decentralisation in Uganda with a budget of 10 mill €, the WB and other development partners are considering continuation of the LGDP II programme in a new phase, and USAID/SDUII is continuing its support in many districts and will focus much in the North in the nearest future.

3.4 Key challenges in the decentralisation reform process

In spite of these positive developments, serious challenges lie ahead:

LG Capacity building

A substantial CB programme was launched under LGDP II, but an insufficient amount of training and capacity building has been delivered at LC3 level due to inadequate CB planning of the district by the HRD office and little use of the District Resource Pools that were destined to deliver the major bulk of training for the LC 3 level.

Low level of LG own revenues

The abolition of the G-tax has led to a sharp decline in local revenues and this has handicapped service delivery, especially at LC 3 level. So far, no suitable replacement has been found, but CG has assured the local governments of an alternative source by July 2007. Inadequate local revenue is a serious danger as districts need local revenue for co-funding of major programmes and the vital link between local taxes and local services is broken.

Tendencies of recentralisation

As mentioned above there have been clear tendencies of recentralisation with centralisation of CAOs and Towns Clerks, abolition of Tender Boards, increased preference for conditional grants, etc.

Increasing number of districts and towns

The tendency of creating more and more districts and towns is also undercutting the goals of having an efficient devolution and local government service delivery. New districts and towns most often have low capacity and a big number of districts and towns overstretch resources from the already strained public budget with demands for new administrative buildings, hiring of new staff, training of staff, more cars, and additional members of Parliament etc.

Insufficient capacity in some districts and at LC3

The establishment of more and more districts puts a strain on human resources and it is difficult to attract enough qualified personnel to sub-counties and municipal divisions.

Urbanisation

The increased population in towns who put pressure on LG services without adequate resources and necessary plans. Partly attributable to lack of a policy on urban management and planning.

Insurgency

The delivery of public services by the Local Governments in the North, North East and South Western parts of the Country has been extremely challenging because of insurgency by the Lords Resistance Army -LRA (North), the Karamojong warriors (North East) and the Allied Democratic Forces - ADF (South West).

4. Strategic priority areas, 2007-2010

4.1 Selection of the key priority areas

ULGA is faced with many challenges and forced to work on many fronts simultaneously. Due to limited financial and personal resources focus must, however, be directed towards a limited number of areas that are of paramount importance for the Association while areas of lesser strategic importance will have temporarily to be left aside.

For the period 2007-2010 the key priority areas are:

- To ensure local government unity and strength
- To provide more and better services to the members
- To increase the influence on Government's policy and legislation

These are the same overall priority areas as in the last Strategic Plan. This is due to the fact that the 3 areas form the core of ULGA's overall mandate, many things still need to be done, and new challenges have arisen due to the changes in the political environment. The reason for focusing upon a smaller number of priorities is the necessity to concentrate resources with a view to making the goals more realistic and to reflect the scarcity of available resources.

4.2 New Areas of Special Emphasis

4.2.1 Special Attention to the North

ULGA values peace, security and harmony as key factors of service delivery and necessary elements for the success of decentralisation. ULGA shall do the following as far as the Northern Uganda Local Governments are concerned:

- Advocate for increased flexibility in grants to the LGs in Northern Uganda.
- Mobilise LGs to support the peace process.
- Represent LGs on the National Committees of NUSAF, PRDP and other initiatives and give technical support to their implementation.
- Mobilise LGs from the rest of the Regions to contribute materials, finances and technical assistance to the LGs in the North for resettlement of the IDPs and rehabilitation of the area.
- Facilitate the ULGA Conflicts Resolution Committee to assist LGs in the North prevent and resolve upcoming conflicts within and between Councils.

- Provide legal, planning, communication, training and other services of the Association to the LGs of the North in an affirmative manner emphasising greater amount and less charge of services to those members.

4.2.2. Increased Services to the Urban Councils

ULGA has done its best to reach out to the UAAU for a merger, but the latter is yet to agree. ULGA takes cognisance of the fact that Uganda is fast urbanising and that the LGs of Uganda are part of a global network, whose voice can only be strong enough in unity at National and International level. Accordingly, the following shall be done to strengthen urban affairs at ULGA and build harmonious mutually re-enforcing co-operation among rural and urban councils:

- Creation of a Department of Urban Affairs directly under the management of the Deputy Secretary General.
- Mobilisation of all Urban Councils to join ULGA as full members.
- Facilitate and provide the necessary logistics for urban leaders to meet and conduct joint activities of the urban nature.
- Strengthen advocacy for physical planning, including development of a proposal to support physical planning of all urban councils and rural growth centres.
- Ensure representation of urban councils in ULGA structures.
- Develop policy paper on urbanisation, as a tool for increased advocacy for urban financing and management, to be shared for synergies with EALGA members and adoption in the East African Community Development agenda.
- Solicit resources for projects in urban housing and infrastructure development. With the assistance of DFID (UK), UN-Habitat and Danida, ULGA has successfully implemented the C3 (City Community Challenge) project worth about Shs. 1.2 billion in Kawempe, Nakawa, Jinja Municipality, Kayunga Town Council, Gulu Municipality and Mpigi Town Council. ULGA shall endeavour to roll-out this initiative to other towns.
- Continue discussions with the UAAU for a possible merger or stronger formal co-operation in commonly agreed areas, such as negotiations, research, organising Conferences, etc...

4.2.3. Improved Network with Civil Society

The role of NGOs, CBOs and Private Sector Organisations in local governance cannot be over-emphasised. ULGA shall continue to reach out to these critical stakeholders, through formal partnership arrangements and promotion of Joint Action Principles.

4.2.4 Stronger Advocacy on Issues Affecting Decentralisation

ULGA has developed a policy paper on critical issues of concern to LGs. The paper was submitted to Government on 14th December 2006. They include:

- Inadequate local revenue due to abolition of G-tax and interference in local taxes.
- Shortfalls in the wage bill and pensions
- Lack of guidelines on multipartyism in LG
- Poor remuneration of Councillors
- VAT arrears and a growing domestic debt in LG
- Recentralisation of LG personnel

- Insurgency in the North
- Creation of New Districts
- Introduction of Regional Governments
- Abolition of LG Tender Boards
- Creation of Town Boards
- Down-sizing of the District Executive Committee
- Urbanisation

ULGA shall step up its capacity for advocacy, negotiation and lobbying by strengthening the UNAT, strengthening strategic partnerships and technical assistance to this function.

4.2.5 Effective Participation in the LoGSIP

ULGA has an important role in the DPSF and LoGSIP so as to drive self-improvement within LGs in Uganda. The thematic areas for ULGA's involvement in the LoGSIP include:

- a) Performance Assessment: ULGA shall seek to minimise centrally imposed targets for service delivery and ensure that they complement locally-driven targets of service delivery reached through participatory processes.
- b) Ethics and Integrity in LGs: ULGA shall develop mechanisms for oversight and scrutiny to incentivise implementation of LG anti-competitiveness and anti-corruption strategies, guided by the ULGA Charter on Accountability and Ethical Code of Conduct.
- c) Local Democracy. ULGA shall contribute to national efforts aimed at building social capital to encourage collective action, civic education for decentralised governance, community participation and social accountability (participatory planning, transparent budgeting, public expenditure tracking, media engagement and social audits). This shall be done mindful of the new multi-party political dispensation.
- d) Local Economic Development. ULGA shall support LGs in improving the local investment climate by removing regulatory constraints and reducing monopolistic practices. Efforts shall be put on improved assessment of local endowment opportunities, using LG services for social transformation and promotion of inward investment through available incentives.
- e) Training and capacity building. ULGA is best placed to assess LG demand for Training and capacity building both in individual and aggregate terms. The Association's capacity to undertake quality assurance in training and capacity building and clearly targeted training packages in partnership with others shall be enhanced. ULGA shall promote innovations through peer learning among LGs, building communities of best practices and assisting the weaker LGs to turn around their performance. The Association should be able to support building of capacity among the LGs to manage their political and technical responsibilities under the multiparty system.
- f) Effective Devolution. ULGA's speciality is in advocacy and promotion of effective devolution principles. The LoGSIP places emphasis on political, administrative and fiscal decentralisation and devolution in these aspects shall remain the focus of ULGA through proactive advocacy, research, information dissemination and replication of best practices.
- g) Cross-cutting Issues. ULGA has a role to play in enabling the LGs address the issues of poverty, HIV/AIDs, environment protection, gender and human rights. ULGA shall develop practical position papers on these issues and take them out to the LGs to adapt them within

their respective budgets, workplans and management practices. ULGA shall work with the various agencies involved in addressing these issues to ensure their full mainstreaming in the local government system in Uganda.

4.3 Implementation of the Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan has the full support and approval of the local governments. The Plan covers the period 2007-2010. Due to the accelerated speed of the Decentralisation Reform it is difficult to fully anticipate the developments in local governments over the next 4 years. The Strategic Plan will therefore be implemented through annual work plans that can be adapted to address new or changing challenges.

After approval by the AGM it becomes the responsibility of the NEC to follow up on the implementation of the Plan. The NEC will report in writing to the AGM of ULGA about the status of implementation of the plan. If necessary, the NEC can in light of fundamental changes in the ongoing Decentralisation Reform recommend changes to the present plan for AGM's approval.

The daily implementation of the Plan rests with the National Secretariat that will ensure the implementation of the Plan quarterly in line with its planning and reporting to the NEC.

The ULGA NEC shall be restructured to ensure adequate representation, particularly of the Sub-counties and Urban Councils, while observing the requirements of a small but optimal size of the Committee, for cost efficiency.

The Secretariat itself shall also undergo restructuring to provide for the office of the Deputy Secretary General and to uplift the Heads of Departments to Director level. ULGA shall establish strong Regional Branches capable of administering their own affairs.

The Monitoring and Evaluation department of ULGA in particular shall be strengthened with more resources and linkage to the District planning Units so that it can play a more active role in monitoring implementation of the Strategic Plan. Quarterly reviews shall be undertaken and reports shall be submitted regularly to NEC for their study and policy guidance.

In 2009, a national conference will be convened to discuss the implementation of the present Plan and to start the preparations of a new plan for the next plan period 2010-2014.

Implementation of the present Plan cannot be done with ULGA's own financial means. Development partners and CG will therefore be requested to support different parts of the Plan. It is, however, an important goal of this Plan to make ULGA less dependent upon external funding of core activities specifically the operational costs, which can only be done by increasing the level of membership fees and payments to ULGA significantly.

5. Strategic objectives

The objectives of the key priority areas are:

5.1 Key priority area 1: To ensure local government unity and strength

5.1.1 Status

The creation of the UNAT in 2004 went a step ahead to ensure representation of all different institutional actors in LGs in the main forum that harmonises the positions of local governments vis-à-vis those of Government Ministries. ULGA's doors are open to all different types of LGs in its membership which membership has expanded with new districts and many LC 3 members.

The members' ability to fund the activities of ULGA was weakened with the decreasing revenues of LGs. In Annex 1 is provided an overview of the funding of ULGA's activities and this shows a big challenge for the long-term sustainability of ULGA with the largest portion of resources coming from different development partners.

The new NEC of ULGA is for the first time elected in a multi-party system and this evidently presents its own challenges

5.1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the activities within *Securing LG Unity and Strength* are:

- To remain party-politically neutral by finding an accommodating mode of cooperation inside ULGA's governing organs and to establish a good cooperation climate with the different political parties
- To strengthen the political leadership of ULGA
- To increase the membership of ULGA, especially at LC 3 level, and increase the payment of membership fees
- To ensure a common stand of districts and urban authorities on all major policy issues
- To combat any tendency of splitting the key actors within the LG "family": Mayors/ Chairpersons, Councils, Speakers, CAOs, Town Clerks, Sub-county leaders, Urban division leaders, CFOs, ULGA/UAAU
- To strengthen the work and functioning of the ULGA's Secretariat and develop the new house into a "House for all LGs in Uganda"
- To make ULGA's regional branches operational for implementation of their intended functions

5.2 Key priority area 2: To provide more and better services to the members

5.2.1 Status

The following services have been delivered by ULGA:

Direct services

- Training of selected staff and councillors

- Legal advice and guidance, incl. conciliation in case of internal/external conflicts
- Information (monthly newsletter and radio programmes etc.)
- Arrangement of conferences and seminars on topical issues, including JARD regional conferences

Indirect services

- Advocacy in relation to CG and Parliament
- International co-operation

These services, in particular the direct services, have however only been delivered in small amounts due to inadequate human and financial resources.

5.2.2 Objectives

The objectives under *Provision of More and Better Services to the Members* are:

- To establish a consultancy unit to deliver services for pay where possible to members, central government institutions, development partners and others
- To make ULGA a viable institution to monitor and evaluate capacity building by private companies and others, to provide targeted training in core areas to key staff categories and councillors, and ensure enhanced capacity building of the LC3 level (sub-counties, towns, urban divisions)
- To expand the amount of legal services provided to the LGs
- To increase the amount of services provided to the members within the area of financial management, budgeting and planning.
- To establish the right means of communication to inform members and key stakeholders about ULGA achievements and policies in a timely manner.

5.3 Key priority area 3: To increase the influence on Government's policy and legislation

5.3.1 Status

ULGA are consulted by CG on key policy areas, like fiscal decentralisation, LG capacity building, planning for key development programmes (e.g. roads, health, water, agriculture, education), but ULGA's viewpoints are not always considered. ULGA is not always able to respond to CG initiatives in a quality manner due to time or resource constraints. ULGA is also more reactive than proactive and that limits the level of influence upon CG.

The establishment of the annual negotiations with sector ministries on the conditional grants marks a clear breakthrough for ULGA but in future it is important to include MoFPED/MoLG in the negotiations.

The challenges facing decentralisation as specified above are signs of the difficulties ahead which require ULGA to strengthen its advocacy and lobbying capacity.

5.3.2 Objectives

The objectives under the priority area *To Increase the Influence on Government's Policy and Legislation* are:

- To strengthen the annual financial negotiation process with sector ministries and negotiations with MoFPED/MoLG on policy issues affecting decentralisation
- To assist LG enhance their local revenue base including negotiating for Agency fees from URA/MoFPED, royalties, etc...
- To become more proactive in the advocacy work and perform the work under the guidance "In time, To the right audience, With the right documentation, Widely communicated, Preferably supported by other institutions"
- To establish a methodology of networking and partnering with key agencies to enhance advocacy and share information
- To prioritise the work in the DSWG under the LGSIP and be represented at the appropriate levels
- To expand the cooperation with the development partners with a view to ensure support to ULGA's core functions and facilitate efficient implementation of decentralisation in cooperation with MoLG, LGFC and the LGs.

6. Conclusion

The ULGA is keen to implement this Strategic Plan as an instrument to guide operations and investments of the Association in those areas that will enable it to grow to full maturity as a national umbrella organisation of the LGs of Uganda.

The Strategic areas selected are aimed at ensuring that by 2010, ULGA will have made a significant contribution to decentralisation policy through uniting and strengthening LGs, giving LGs more and better Association member services and influencing Government policy and legislation.

As a member of the DSWG, ULGA has a unique positioning to work closely with MoLG, LGFC, DDPG, CSOs and other stakeholders in the implementation of the DPSF and LOGSIP. This particular Strategic Plan is ULGA's expression of the LGs commitment to the task. It calls for support from all Partners in achieving the targets agreed in here.