



GUIDELINES FOR NATION-WIDE IDENTIFICATION AND MAPPING OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDS) ON THE NATIONAL VOTERS REGISTER (NVR).

1.0. LAWS APPLICABLE

- (a) The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (as amended)
- (b) The Electoral Commission Act, CAP 140 (as amended)
- (c) The Political Parties and Organizations Act, 2005 (As amended)
- (d) Persons With Disabilities (PWDA) Act, 2020
- (e) Other attendant rules and regulations

2.0. BACKGROUND

The Electoral Commission was established under Article 61 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) and is mandated to organize regular free and fair elections and referenda. Article 61 (1) (e) of the Constitution enjoins the Commission to compile, maintain, revise and update the voters register; and Section 12 (1) (e) and (k) of the Electoral Commission Act, Cap 140 provides that the Commission shall subject to and for purposes of carrying out its functions under Chapter Five of the Constitution and the Act, have the powers to take measures to ensure that the entire electoral process is conducted under conditions of freedom and fairness and ensure that Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are able to vote without any hindrance.

The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides for affirmative action under Article 82 in favour of marginalized groups on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom, for purposes of redressing imbalances which exist against them. Section 12 (1)(g) of Electoral Commission Act, in line with Article 61(1) (g) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, mandates the Commission to provide voter education to citizens on the purpose and voting procedures, including the use of sign language where applicable.

3.0. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

Disability in a legal context, refers to a 'substantial functional limitation of a person's daily life activities caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment and environmental barriers,

resulting in limited participation in society on equal basis with others and includes an impairment specified in Schedule 3 to the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2020.

3.1 Categories of Disabilities

- (i) Physical disability caused by cerebral palsy, amputation of a limb, paralysis or Deformity
- (ii) Hearing disability including deafness and hard of hearing disability
- (iii) Visual disability including blindness and low vision disability
- (iv) Deaf and blind disability
- (v) Mental disability, including psychiatric disability.
- (vi) Little people
- (vii) Albinism
- (viii) Multiple disability

For a person to qualify to be a voter in Uganda, he or she must be a citizen of Uganda of t eighteen years of age or above and resides in or originates from the parish in which he or she applies to vote. The Electoral Commission may carry out this function by utilising data from the applicant or the national citizens register maintained by the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA).

4.0 THE PURPOSE OF CONDUCTING THE EXERCISE

The exercise is informed by the endemic challenges the Commission has been facing in ensuring full participation of PWDs which include; lack of adequate information on the number of PWDs, types of disabilities, literacy levels of deaf persons, types of sign languages in use, among others. Lack of adequate information affects planning for the inclusive participation of PWDs for example; previous meetings with the PWD activists indicated a desire for promotion of independent voting (secret marking of the ballot paper) by the visually impaired during elections of all categories and levels. One of the identified means to achieve this requirement is the use of braille but this can only be achieved if the number, location and literacy levels of deaf persons is known so as to aid planning.

Whereas it is easy to compile registers of other SIGs by simply extracting from the NVR, it is difficult for PWDs since the information is not captured during the general update of the NVR.

Therefore, this exercise will help the Commission achieve the following;

- (a) Identify PWDs, nature of disability, literacy level and whether they are registered voters.

- (b) Allow Persons with Disabilities who may have applied for registration by NIRA and desire to vote, ascertain whether their names have been included in the National Voters Register (NVR).
- (c) Provide an opportunity for scrutiny of the PWD voters' roll in each village in the district in order to identify particulars of persons who may be ineligible (with no recognized form of disability) from appearing on the register, the Dead (D), those persons who might have left the area (LA) and other reasons.
- (d) Raise awareness and encourage participation of PWDs in cleaning of the PWD voters roll at village level in preparation for the Update exercise as per the road map for the 2025/2026 General Elections.
- (e) Identify all Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in their respective villages for purposes of compiling the registers for PWDs in preparation for the Update exercise in accordance with the General Elections Roadmap.
- (f) Identify peculiar issues that hinder the full participation of PWDs

4.1 How the Exercise will be conducted

Village Council meetings shall be convened at all villages within the Parish/Ward to be chaired by the respective Local Council I (LCI) Chairperson. The parish/ward supervisor shall guide the identification/verification of PWDs on the voters roll during the village council meeting.

He/she will be expected to do the following:

- (a) Show courtesy to the Village Council and project a good image of the Electoral Commission;
- (b) Explain to the Village Council the purpose of the meeting so as to carry out
Identification of Persons with Disabilities;
- (c) Present a brief background of the exercise, especially why it is being carried out and how it will be conducted;
- (d) Conduct a roll call of the members on the PWDs village voters roll before all present for identification and confirmation;
- (e) Identify and capture particulars of PWD voters missing on the register;
- (f) Note for deletion all ineligible voters on the PWD register;
- (g) Document or record and sign all forms availed; and
- (h) Confirm that all materials used during the meeting are prepared for retrieval.

4.2 The materials required for conducting the exercise

The parish/ward supervisor will be availed the following materials;

- (a) An extract of the PWD voters roll for each village;

- (b) A list of villages per parish;
- (c) A template of the **ATTENDANCE LIST**;
- (d) **Form EC/PWDM 1** for compiling the list of particulars of all PWD voters who identify as PWDs and;
- (e) **Form EC/PWDM 2** for compiling a list of particulars of PWD voters identified for removal from the PWD voters register e.g. Death (D), Left Area (LA), Duplicate (DU), Under Age (UA) and Not Eligible(NE).

4.3 During the meeting any complaints arising from inclusion of particulars on the PWD

Voters roll shall be received and documented as follows;

- (a) **FORM EC/PWDM1** shall be signed by the L.C 1 Chairperson;
- (b) **Form EC/PWDM2** for documenting all identified particulars of voters (PWDs) who have died, i.e. the Dead (Coded as **D**); those who have Left the Area (Coded as **LA**); Duplicate (**DU**); Under Age (**UA**) and Not Eligible(**NE**). The codes **MUST** also be indicated against the respective names appearing on the village voters roll provided and the form shall also be signed by the L.C 1 Chairperson.
- (c) The attendance list and minutes, duly signed and stamped shall be attached to the village register used during the verification exercise together with the **FORM EC/PWDM1** and **FORM EC/PWDM2** to be handed over to the sub-county supervisor for onward transmission to the District Election Administrator/Returning Officer; and
- (d) Duly signed minutes of the meeting will also be shared with the Commission as evidence of this activity.
- (e) **Note:** The voter being reported as having left the area (LA) in 4.3 (b) above is that voter who has not only left the village but also the parish/ward.

4.4 Identification of Persons with Disabilities (PWDS) at Village level

During the exercise, the Commission will compile the lists of PWDs identified by the Village Councils. The identification of PWDs right from village level is important for compiling registers needed for elections involving members of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs).

The Parish Supervisor will ensure that the PWDs identified are recorded for each village on the form EC/PWDM2 provided. The appropriate code associated with a disability type will also be entered in the form EC/PWDM2. The particulars of the person identifying the PWD **MUST** also be entered in the form.

NB: Where a person is identified as a PWD, but is not registered on the National Voters Register, he/she shall be advised to first register as a citizen of Uganda in order to qualify for registration as a voter.

5.0 MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF THE EXERCISE

The exercise in the districts shall be supervised overall by the Commission.

Other levels of supervision shall be as follows

- (a) Every District Election Administrator/Returning Officer shall be responsible for the exercise in his/her district. He/she shall receive materials used in the exercise from every parish submitted through the respective Sub-County Verification Officer.
- (b) The village level identification of PWDs exercise shall be carried out by the Parish Verification Officer who shall report to their respective Sub-County Verification Officer.
- (c) The Commission shall closely monitor and supervise the entire exercise.

6.0 EXPECTED OUTPUT

- The exercise will lead to identification of PWD voters in every village/cell;
- The Commission will have a credible PWD register thus facilitating the participation of PWDs in the elections as required by the law;
- The exercise will enable the Commission to possess disaggregated data on disability per category per village/parish which is essential in planning for electoral activities;
- This data will also facilitate the Commission to develop inclusive voter education materials in a more accessible format for different categories of disability; and
- This data will enable the Commission to ensure that polling stations are located at convenient sites for persons with physical disability.