

Ugandan Grandmothers Gathering

The town of Entebbe is on a peninsula on the north shore of Lake Victoria, the second largest freshwater lake in the world after Lake Superior. It was the location for the Ugandan Grandmothers Gathering October 5-7, 2015. Five hundred grandmothers from across Uganda made history in Entebbe as they came together for the country's first national grandmothers' gathering. There were many workshops and planning



sessions in order to move forward with their mission. Canadian grandmothers were also in attendance to learn and to listen and to take the information back to their Canadian grandmothers' groups.

On the final day of the Gathering, the grandmothers of Uganda, at long last, had the opportunity to talk directly to a high-level representative of their government. The Ugandan Minister of Gender and Social Development had provided a keynote address. However, he was not prepared for the sophistication and tenacity of the grandmothers' questions. In the Q and A, he grew progressively more defensive and angrier. "Why is it there



are no legal provisions for those that are widows, even though they have so many responsibilities?" "I'm a pensioner. I wonder why I don't get my money for some months, and when they pay September, they don't pay July and August?" "Is there a way the government can support the elderly and the widows to make sure they can get titles on the pieces of land where they have lived for years?" "When a husband dies leaving a custodian, the custodians won't release the land to the ownership of the widows and children. They hold on to it for 10 years. Who is going to support us to resolve these issues?"

The Ugandan Grandmothers' Statement was forged at this Gathering. This is a part of that statement. "To our government, the private sector, civil society, media, UN Agencies and members of the international community, the grandmothers of Uganda have a powerful vision for a future in which our families and communities are thriving, and have left the ravages of AIDS behind. With the support of our community-based organizations we have made huge strides, and we know a vibrant future is possible, but we cannot do it alone. To our Canadian sisters in the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, you are an important part of our story and we feel your solidarity as we build momentum.

We are 500 grandmothers here today, but we represent millions more. We are not young, but we are strong. We want the world to know how much we have achieved and how much we have overcome. We have breath to sing and energy to dance. We are moving forward! Join us!" Read the entire statement here:

https://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/assets/files/uganda_statement_2015.pdf

Information from: *Powered by Love*, pages 268-275

Photos from: <http://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/get-involved/past-events/ugandan-grandmothers-gathering> and <https://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/news-resources/grassroots-newsletter/fall-2015/2>

Prepared by Margie Cogill of the VG4A Education Working Group

The Ugandan Grandmothers Gathering in October 2015 was supported by The Stephen Lewis Foundation.

