

Talking points H.E. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga
PGA Roundtable on the abolition of the death penalty
7 October 2015

- Glad to have hosted this roundtable in the Parliament of Uganda on an important topic in the Parliament organized by Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), a network of which I am a member, of more than 1300 around the world promoting human rights, the Rule of Law, gender equality, non-discrimination, peace and democracy.
- As you know, the vision of the Parliament of Uganda, as stated in our 5 year strategic Plan, is to be a “Transformation, vibrant and people-centered Parliament”, with a mission “to achieve improved accountability, representation, constitutional democracy, rule of law and sustainable national development in Uganda”. This is why I encourage discussion on difficult topics such as the one of the abolition of the death penalty as part of the democratic exercise of Parliaments to debate about issues which affect the population.
- As you know from the discussions, two members of our parliament, Hon. Fox Odoi and Hon. Alice Alaso have in 2013 introduced a bill abolishing a controversial bill that shall abolish the death penalty in Uganda. This bill aims to replace the death penalty every time it occurs by life imprisonment in light of the intrinsic right to life of all individuals, which underpins all other rights.
- This Action had been taken following recent judicial developments in Uganda such as in the case of Susan Kigula and 416 others when in 2009 the Supreme Court of Uganda upheld the decision of the Constitutional Court that the mandatory death penalty is unconstitutional because it prevents a judge from taking into account all mitigating circumstances in a sentencing decision.
- This initiative shows the leading role of parliamentarians and reminds us that reforms related to human rights should always be on top of the legislative agenda and be discussed no matter the context. I know that you have discussed quite extensively this role of parliamentarians during the roundtable, which is particularly important to highlight as policy makers and leaders of opinion.
- Uganda, in its leadership role in Africa on issues of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, is always open to discuss issues like that in parliament. Our parliament represents our people.

When the Honorable Chairman of the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee Honorable Tashobya, who also holds the role of Chairman of Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) and is known among MPs for his work around the International Criminal Court, approached me to host this Seminar in the

parliament I was of course open to the idea. In light of my travelling I could not attend the Opening Ceremony, which I know he chaired very well, but I insisted to give the Closing remarks in light of the importance of such topics related to human rights and the Rule of Law.

Indeed, all matters that are being discussed in the Ugandan public, shall also be open to discussion in the Parliament, since we are the elected representation of the people.

- I am therefore pleased to see that participants had a successful Seminar and a high-level discussion of this topic, to be able to take well informed decisions on the topic when being asked to vote in parliament.