**ASSOCIATION OF RELIGIOUS IN UGANDA (ARU)**

**Workshop on Pastoral Compassionate Response to Victims of Sexual Abuse in Situations of Conflict**

**RESOLUTIONS**

We, the undersigned consecrated men and women from various religious institutes under the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU), gathered at ARU Secretariat, Kampala, from 12th to 18th August 2018 in a formation workshop on Pastoral Compassionate Response to Victims of Sexual Abuse in Situations of Conflict, sponsored by Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), Commission for the Union of Superior Generals (USG), and International Union of Superior Generals (UISG) in Rome, have reflected deeply on sexual violence in the context of conflict and in our communities and institutions in Uganda.

Touched by the impunity with which sexual violence is committed against children, boys, girls, men and women in both war and peace times, and by the fact that sexual violence, especially rape, has been used before as a weapon of war in our country particularly in Luwero, Northern Uganda and Western Uganda, and currently, in neighboring countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, and that it continues to manifest in our country in form of abductions and rape of mainly girls and women, defilement and other sexual abuses.

Aware of the fact that sexual violence is multidimensional - social, political and economic - and is deeply rooted in misdirected expression of human sexuality, misguided ideologies, unresolved personal and societal grievances, and breakdown in moral and spiritual fibers of our society.

Concerned that the impact of sexual violence on individuals and communities can be devastating, manifesting in traumatic behavior such as violence, withdrawal, substance abuse; sexual promiscuity; loss of self-worth and suicide; poverty; poor health; loss of faith and relationship with God; and ultimately, death, and that all these are happening in our areas of apostolate.

Appreciative of the role of various stakeholders in the struggle against sexual violence in our communities, and the opportunity they provide for us for constructive partnership that can further enhance and sustain our momentum and resolve to eliminate sexual violence in our society.

Challenged by the fact that we, consecrated men and women, urged by our special vocation in society and by the love of Christ who died so that all may have life and have it to the full, have a big role to play in preventing both the underlying drivers of sexual violence such as war, domestic discord, poverty, ignorance and negative cultural practices, and in mitigating the impact on individuals and communities.

Therefore, commit ourselves at both individual and congregational levels to among other things;

1. Living our prophetic call to be the salt, leaven and light of the world
2. Putting in place mechanisms for addressing the root causes as well as manifestations of sexual violence in both church and society.
3. Take a lead in advocating for effective enforcement of existing laws and policies against sexual violence.
4. Undertake initiatives within our apostolate to promote and support efforts against sexual violence.
5. Reach out and show compassion to victims of sexual violence and accord them all necessary support within our means.
6. Work with other individuals and institutions in addressing the root causes and manifestations of sexual violence.

Furthermore, we resolve, as participants of this workshop, under ARU, to;

1. Create internal mechanism to support colleagues with traumatic experiences.
2. Put in place a sexual harassment policy to be used by member religious institutes of Association of Religious in Uganda.
3. Increase our presence in the refugee settlements in Uganda
4. The Justice and Peace Committee of ARU coordinates the sexual violence response.
5. Establish and enhance collaboration with other stakeholders, faith and non-confessional organizations.
6. Put in place mechanism for information sharing, reporting and networking amongst us.

We are grateful for the financial support made available through the Embassy of United Kingdom to the Holy See for this project which has been given in partnership with UISG.

We commit these resolutions to the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the intercession of Mother Mary Queen of Peace and the Martyrs of Uganda, and seek His guidance in our efforts to serve the poor and the downtrodden, most especially victims of sexual violence in our apostolate.