

## AFFECTED

Among the 66 agencies, nearly half of them (31) are bodies of the United Nations, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, writes **Charlès Etukuri**

# OVER 60 NGOS HIT AS TRUMP SUSPENDS FUNDING AGAIN



US president Trump



CEWIGO executive director Ekochu

## EXECUTIVE ORDER

Marco Rubio, the US Secretary of State, said in the statement: "In furtherance of Executive Order 14199, President Trump announced the withdrawal of the US from 66 international organisations identified as part of the Trump Administration's review of wasteful, ineffective, and harmful international organisations. Review of additional international organisations pursuant to Executive Order 14199 remains ongoing."

Rubio added: "The Trump Administration has found these institutions to be redundant in their scope, mismanaged, unnecessary, wasteful, poorly run, captured by the interests of actors advancing their own agendas contrary to our own, or a threat to our nation's sovereignty, freedoms, and general prosperity. President Trump is clear: It is no longer acceptable to be sending these institutions the blood, sweat, and treasure of the American people, with little to nothing to show for it. The days of billions

of dollars in taxpayer money flowing to foreign interests at the expense of our people are over."

While the US constitution allows presidents to join treaties "provided two thirds of Senators present concur", it does not specify what happens if they were to withdraw, which means Trump's move could face legal challenges.

A member of a US-based non-profit advocacy group, the Union of Concerned Scientists, described the step as a "new low".

Senior policy director Rachel Cleetus told AFP that it was another sign that the Trump administration, which she described as "authoritarian" and "anti-science", was determined to sacrifice people's wellbeing and destabilise global co-operation.

Last year, Trump once again withdrew the US from the Paris climate agreement and declined to send a delegation to the COP30 climate summit in Brazil.

NGOs, which implement programmes on sexual health, gender-based violence, population monitoring, and humanitarian responses, which aligns with Uganda's National Development Plans.

UNFPA is currently running the multi-billion Government of Uganda/UNFPA 9th Country Programme (2021-2025). The country programme is aligned with national priorities, as outlined in National Vision

2040, National Development Plan III (2020/21-2024/25), the United Nations Sustainable Development Co-operation Framework for Uganda (2021-2025) and the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2021. It has also greatly contributed to harnessing the demographic dividend.

Other international NGOs that directly finance Ugandan projects are also affected.

## UBOS AFFECTED

UNFPA is also the lead agency that has supported the Government of Uganda through the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) to collect census and survey population data to inform and influence policy on sexual reproductive health, gender-based violence and the fight against HIV.

UNFPA has also been supporting the Government in ensuring provision of quality



**Also affected is UNFPA, a leading provider of reproductive and maternal health services in Uganda.**

family planning services in an equitable manner through specific programmes focusing on high-burdened regions in the country.

It also advocates the rights of young people and works to influence policy to ensure young people's access to accurate information and services related to sexuality and reproductive health. This is besides its renowned efforts in fighting sexual violence, early marriages and female genital mutilation.

## NON-UN AGENCIES AFFECTED

Among the affected non-UN agencies is Education Cannot Wait (ECW), which funds the education sector in Uganda, especially supporting the girl-child education. Since 2023, ECW has funded Uganda's education sector to the tune of \$76m (about sh273b).

Also, funding has been suspended to Global Counter Terrorism Forum, Global Forum on Cyber Expertise, Global Forum on Migration and Development, International Law Commission, UN Democracy Fund, which have been involved in funding government to fight cyber crime, terrorism, human and drug trafficking, among others.

## STAKEHOLDERS' COMMENT

Didacus Okoth, the UBOS spokesperson, said UNFPA provides significant technical and financial support to the

statistics body, including donating equipment like computers for the preparatory mapping exercise and the execution of the 2024 census, which was a major collaborative effort.

"It is regrettable that the US has withdrawn support to them," Okoth said.

Jocelyn Ekochu, the executive director and Board Secretary of Centre for Women in Governance (CEWIGO) described the decision by the US as disastrous.

CEWIGO is an NGO started in 2006 to promote gender equality and good governance in Uganda.

"This is uncalled for. We cannot even understand why they are doing that. As if the US is looking to distance itself from other countries and there must be a reason why the UN is there. While they have the right to withdraw funding, it is disastrous," Ekochu said.

She noted that Trump's earlier decision to close the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) had already caused untold suffering.

Asked to comment on the sudden withdrawal of funding, the US embassy in Kampala referred us to the statement sent by Marco Rubio, the US Secretary of State, dated January 7, 2026.

## USAID WITHDRAWAL

In February last year, Trump dealt the fight against HIV/AIDS in Uganda a heavy blow when he cut funding to UNAIDS, a body which was playing a crucial role in reducing new HIV infections, providing treatment, and supporting people living with the virus. He later disbanded the agency in July last year.

This prompted the Ugandan government to close private HIV clinics and merge HIV services with other general health services, a move that persons living with HIV said has stripped them of privacy. They also say this could result into some patients stopping to go to health centres to pick antiretroviral drugs for fear of being stigmatised, which could endanger their lives.

## UNFPA

Also affected is the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a body that has been a leading provider of reproductive and maternal health services in Uganda.

An official at UNFPA, who is not authorised to speak, said Trump's decision is bound to affect thousands both directly and indirectly and starve government and many agencies of billions of shillings.

The official said UNFPA was partnering with several ministries like that of health, gender; other UN agencies like United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation, UN Women, United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, World Food Programme and the International Labour Organisation.

UNFPA has also been working with development partners like the Danish Embassy and over 60 local