

BY DAVID WALUGEMBE

# HR practitioners push for stronger workplace

**KAMPALA.** Human resource practitioners have called on the government to strengthen legal and policy frameworks to better protect women in the workplace, warning that existing gaps continue to expose them to exploitation, discrimination, and harassment.

The experts are advocating for reforms, including the introduction of a minimum wage policy, improved workplace protections, and the enactment of the Human Resource Management Professionals Bill, 2025, to promote fairness, professionalism, and gender equality in employment.

Speaking at an event organised by HR Funhouse at the Uganda Golf Club last weekend, organisation's president Joel Kafiire said stronger policies are needed to address persistent inequalities affecting women in the labour market.

Mr Kafiire urged the government to introduce measures such as a minimum wage framework to ensure equal pay for

men and women, alongside regulations that protect female employees from discrimination.

"People believe that women are not supposed to get job opportunities on merit; some think a woman must first be harassed before being employed," he said.

"In some organisations, you find a woman being paid less in the same role where a man is paid more. Some women do not have the aggressiveness to bargain like men, which is why we need policies to close these gaps," he added.

He also urged employers to improve working conditions, particularly for vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, sick employees, and female workers assigned night shifts. Mr Kafiire also

called on men to support women's professional growth.

The meeting, organised to mark International Women's Day, also sought to recognise the role of women in shaping the future of the human resource profession.

Meanwhile, Eva Nazziwa Lubowa, the Director of Human Resource and Administration at the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA), urged Parliament to pass the Human Resource Management Professionals Bill, 2025, to strengthen professionalism within the sector.

Ms Nazziwa said the proposed law would protect HR practitioners from discrimination and establish disciplinary mechanisms to address misconduct in the profession.

## SURVEY ON VIOLENCE

According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, a 2021 national survey on violence against women and girls found that about 86 percent of women had experienced some form of violence at their workplace within the 12 months preceding the study. Verbal abuse was the most common form, reported by 84 percent of respondents.

"If the HR Bill is approved, we shall have order in the profession. Many people want to work as HR practitioners even when they are not trained, and if we do not protect ourselves from these masqueraders, we are in trouble," she said.

The proposed legislation was introduced in Parliament last year by the

Workers' Member of Parliament, Ms Margaret Rwabushaija. If passed into law and assented to by the President, practising human resource management without a valid certificate would become a criminal offence punishable by a fine of up to Shs10 million or six months in prison.

Another HR practitioner, Barbrah Okeita, called on the Judiciary and police to expedite sexual harassment and assault cases to ensure justice for victims.

"Some women fear reporting sexual harassment because they doubt they will get justice. We urge the judiciary to ensure such cases are handled promptly and effectively," she said.

She also urged the government to support youth employment, particularly for young women, by equipping graduates with tools and mentorship programme.

International Women's Day, celebrated every March 8, is a global day recognising the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women while also serving as a call to accelerate gender equality.