**Third National Partnership Forum**

September 22, 2016 | Kampala Serena International Conference Centre

**Statement by Ms. Jennie Barugh, Head of DFID**

**Chair of the Local Development Partners’ Group**

*As prepared for delivery*

Right Honorable Prime Minister,

Honorable Ministers,

Excellences, Heads of Diplomatic Missions and Heads of Development Cooperation,

Heads of Government Agencies,

Permanent Secretaries,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All Protocol Observed:

On behalf of the Local Development Partners’ Group, I thank you, Right Honorable Prime Minister, for inviting us for this third National Partnership Forum!

A lot has happened since we met at the second National Partnership Forum in July last year. Most notably a new Cabinet has been formed following the elections in February. So let me start by congratulating you all on your new appointments and re-appointments: As Uganda’s development partners, we are looking forward to working with you in order to strengthen our partnership and deliver results that meet the expectations of Ugandans.

As many of you may know, the Local Development Partners’ Group consists of bilateral and multilateral development partners and is the apex coordination forum for development partners in Uganda. The purpose of the group is to promote harmonized and effective development cooperation in Uganda aligned with sector and national priorities. Meetings like today’s are therefore very important for us in order to deepen our partnership with you – providing an opportunity to discuss with you how our development assistance can most effectively support Government’s goals and systems, and how we can ensure transparency and accountability towards Ugandan citizens in the management of development cooperation.

Right Honorable Prime Minister:

One year ago, heads of state gathered in New York for the historic United Nations General Assembly that adopted the post-2015 development agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs officially came into effect in January 2016 at the conclusion of the Millennium Development Goals, and since then countries around the world have worked to bring the SDGs to life. Uganda is no exception. But actually, Uganda was already bringing the SDGs to life *before* they were adopted by integrating them in the second National Development Plan, which has now been implemented for more than a year. And Ministries, Departments and Agencies are working to localize the SDGs and integrate the 169 targets in the national M&E system. As Uganda’s development partners, we welcome your proactivity, we congratulate you on achievements so far, and we stand ready to continue supporting your efforts. [Let’s leave no one behind!]

Let me also take this opportunity to recognize Uganda’s critical role in the region and to reiterate our strong support to the Government’s response to the influx of refugees from South Sudan since violence broke out in July this year. More than 150,000 refugees have arrived since then, and Uganda is now hosting close to 700,000 refugees. This is inevitably putting a strain on host communities, with local government authorities and agencies struggling to cope and provide basic and essential services, which makes the Government’s response to the situation all the more admirable. Uganda’s approach to refugee management is among the most progressive in the world, and you are indeed providing an example to follow globally. We are impressed and thankful to Uganda, and we are committed to support you both in the emergency response and in ensuring the refugees are enabled and empowered to sustain themselves over time.

Right Honorable Prime Minister:

Today’s National Partnership Forum is taking place almost 100 days on from when the new Cabinet was sworn in. Therefore, today’s Forum presents a good opportunity to exchange views and to take stock of the opportunities and challenges that are being faced, and how our partnership can best succeed. The focus of our discussion, on improving delivery of public services and getting results, is therefore very welcome and necessary.

Fully aware that there is no substitute for good leadership, we look to you, Right Honorable Prime Minister, and your fellow ministers to lead our joint efforts in getting results. In that regard, it is important for us to know who to go to. As it happens, we often get similar requests for support from different Ministries, Departments and Agencies. We would welcome more clarity on mandates, roles and responsibilities, so that our support promotes cohesion of efforts and not fragmentation.

Right Honorable Prime Minister:

A big challenge for us all is how implementation performance in Uganda can be improved. A study last year by your Office found that out of 60 projects financed by development partners, 81 percent performed unsatisfactory and were unlikely to be completed by the initial project completion date. Some of the challenges identified included delays in Cabinet and Parliamentary approvals, lack of counterpart funding, capacity constraints, and poor contract management. These challenges are not limited to projects financed by development partners, but apply to all public investment projects.

We also know from the Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit in Ministry of Finance (BMAU, 2014) that factors leading to poor public sector performance include weak performance management practices, inadequate staffing levels especially in Local Governments, and limited participation and engagement of citizens due to poor implementation of Client Charters. Many of these challenges have been noted consistently during the budget monitoring processes, and now is the time for a more concentrated follow-up by the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies. In this way, service delivery can be improved and the return on public investments will significantly increase, thus enabling the Government to achieve its development goals and Ugandans to have greater opportunities to reach their potential.

Right Honorable Prime Minister:

Like you, we are interested in addressing these challenges of implementation to enhance development outcomes and improve service delivery. We have previously agreed on a matrix with key result areas to ensure that our dialogue is oriented towards results and tangible outcomes for the Ugandan people. Advancement on these key result areas is being monitored through technical partnership meetings, but so far progress has been mixed. Most results areas are hampered by the implementation issues we are discussing today – so these underpinning issues around delivery and implementation – “making things happen” – are key to unlocking progress across all sectors. We need to ensure that progress on these issues is fast-tracked and coordinated through the joint Sector Working Groups, and that reporting on progress is done through the GAPR process.

I have already mentioned good leadership and I know that was a topic for discussion this morning and will be discussed further this afternoon. As we all recognize, good leadership is absolutely critical for delivering results – particularly when the changes that are needed involve changes in culture and behavior by individuals. Bold, clear and resolute leadership will help everyone understand what needs to change and what their individual role needs to be. I would emphasize three areas, which I believe have also been highlighted in various assessments and reviews of Government:

1. Strong management that sets out planned results up-front, strategies to deliver, clear monitoring frameworks with well-defined indicators and systems to monitor progress and take corrective action – learning from success as well as failure.
2. Transparency in ambition, strategy and achievement through publicly available information so that Ministries, Departments and Agencies and development partners can be held accountable by Ugandans.
3. Accountability that bites so that individuals know that they need to perform with accountability institutions fully fulfilling their mandates.

This is an ambitious agenda – and one which development partners look forward to supporting you with.

Right Honorable Prime Minister:

On behalf of the Local Development Partners’ Group, let me conclude by reaffirming our commitment to increase the effectiveness of our cooperation with Government and other partners in order to support the achievement of the national development goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.

We hope that this third National Partnership Forum will help us to identify concrete actions that can be taken individually and collectively by the Government and development partners to improve implementation performance in Uganda. And we expect that through such actions our partnership will be better equipped to support the delivery of real results by and for citizens of this country. The great people of Uganda deserve only our very best.

On behalf of the LDPG, let me end by thanking you for your personal leadership and commitment to this Partnership Dialogue. Through you, allow me also to thank all Government participants who prioritized this meeting and to your colleagues in OPM who have helped to prepare it. Thanks also to the resource persons from Delivery Associates, the Malaysian Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) and the Harvard School of Public Health for your role today.

We look forward to open and fruitful and discussions.

Thank you.