

## **BRIEF PROFILE OF HON. MARGARET ZZIWA NANTONGO (M.P)**

Currently I am serving as Member East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) a regional Parliament of the five Partner states of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi.

1. I bring along with me a long experience and interest of Habitat issues (Housing , slum improvements, environment) and other related issues both at political leadership level, at academic research level where I looked at Housing as a practical gender need (PGN) and aspiration for every woman to have for safety , and security . I have shared with several women activists and housing officials efforts to improve housing for several inhabitants especially the women in the various parts of my constituency like in Kisenyi in Kampala.

2. I served as a City councilor for Kampala City, the Capital City of Uganda for over 7 years (1989-1995) where I chaired and served on various committees which deal with housing. I chaired the Committee of Lands and Urban Development of Kampala city council and the committee of Housing and Welfare both committees dealt directly with houses for the City council and the land planning in the City.

3. This also gave me the opportunity to serve on the International Council for local environmental initiatives, (ICLEI) an international initiative aiming at pursuing the local agenda 21 Initiatives at the local and municipal governments. This was the Rio de Janero Agenda for improving the Cities and urban environments.

4. I served on the Executive committee of ICLEI as an Executive committee member (Ex com) representing Africa. During this time I

initiated many programs which included twinning programs of Cities ( Entebbe with Yellow Knife in Canada, Jinja with Leister in UK , Gulu with Oslo in Norway, and Masaka and Kampala went in partnership programs for best practices of management of their Cities. Practical grass root programs like greening of the City, garbage management (sorting at household level including management of plastics and polythene bags) tree planting and fuel management were some of the key urban and housing programs.

5. I have served as a member of Parliament of Uganda representing Kampala City for over 10 years ( 1996-2006) where I have collaborated with government like the Ministry of Works, Housing and urban development in initiating programs for access to housing , better housing, and slum improvement. I participated vigorously in legislation of the Condominium Law (2002) and The Land Act 1998 which aimed at improving access to housing particularly for the poor, the land less and the sitting tenants in flat lets.

6. On the academic front, I have interrogated housing for women looking at it as a practical gender need ( PGN) I have carried out research on assessing women's participation in housing schemes, drawing on Namuwongo as a case study. Actually that constituted my master's dissertation for the award on a Masters' degree in Women and Gender studies of Makerere University. Some of the findings of my study points out clearly the deficiency in policy particularly with regard to areas of access and affordability. This is evidenced in the new status of Namuwongo being high cost housing instead of a low cost housing and a new big slum of SOWETO cropping up at the bottom eastern side of Namuwongo. This scenario is not different in other areas where slum upgrading has been done like in Masese in Jinja.

7. Now as a member of East African legislative Assembly, this august body is a member of Global Parliamentarians Forum on Habitat. It is on this basis that I am attending this 22nd General Council on habitat here in Nairobi. I thank and appreciate the theme of the GC22 of “Affordable Housing finance systems in the face of the financial crisis” which is a very important theme considering the deplorable living conditions of our people, the poverty and the sprouting slums in many cities. The facts and figures show that slums are still growing at an alarming rate. In Uganda for instance, with a population of about 30 million where about 14% of this is urban, 93% of this lives in slum areas. It remains a paradox whether the question of appropriate housing has yet been drawn into the policy construction agenda in Uganda. The challenge of achieving the millennium Development goals (MDGS) by 2025 still feels very far. “Descent Housing for all”

8. As Parliamentarians we have a role to play. We must demand appropriate housing policies which not only include conception and formulation(policies on paper) but also comprehensive implementation of these policies with adequate financial and human resources. We must hold our governments accountable. It is our role to ensure that housing is kept on the government priority agenda, particularly in the face of the Global Financial crisis, where many programs of slum improvements are funded by international Agencies like UN Habitat.

8. As parliamentarians, we need also to become proactive, to ask questions to Ministers about housing conditions of our people. Let us also move private members bills that favour better housing and urban development.

I THANK YOU