



## STATEMENT

### UPR Pre-session on Uganda

7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> December

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#### Presentation of the Organization

This statement is delivered on behalf of the Right to food cluster comprising of Food Rights Alliance – FRA, Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI-Uganda), Caritas Uganda, Community Integrated Development Initiatives (CIDI) and National Youth Advocacy Platform (NYAP), Uganda Common Voice Farmers' Platform, Civil society budget advocacy group, Slow food Uganda., Hunger project, Uganda forum for agricultural advisory services -UFAAS and Global Consumer Center -CONSENT under the National Stakeholders' Forum for the UPR – a loose network of over 300 NGOs dedicated to following up on UPR mechanism. All these organizations, with varying experience and expertise are key actors in the advocacy of the right to food in Uganda and the attendant rights. The National Stakeholders' Forum for the UPR has participated in UPR processes at National level since 2013.

#### National consultations for the drafting of the national report

The Uganda Human rights commission led inter-governmental agencies' consultations for the development of the National report. The process included consultations with CSOs. CSOs during the development of their various alternative reports invited the Uganda Human rights commission and other agencies concerned with administering justice to participate in consultations for the development of reports in various sectors.

#### Statement

##### General Introduction on the right to food status in Uganda

'The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has the physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.'<sup>1</sup>

Ugandans are still faced with both physical and invisible hunger. Of the estimated total population of 41 Million people in Uganda, 26% is living in a stressed food insecurity zone (IPC Phase 2)<sup>2</sup>. East Central with 1.88m has the highest population under this category; followed by the South Western region; 1.24 million, Teso region-1.1 million and the West Nile region with 1.04 million. Further 69% of the total population in the country is minimally food insecure (IPC Phase 1), 5% of the total population in the country is in Crisis (IPC Phase 3)<sup>3</sup>. In regard to urban variation, 17% of the population in Kampala is faced with acute food insecurity (IPC phase 3+)<sup>4</sup>. The situation was similar for other 11 urban centers assessed where 19% of the population on average were in acute food insecurity situation (IPC phase

<sup>1</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)". *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*. Retrieved 02 July 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Integrated food security phase classification 2017; <http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1027031/?iso3=UGA>

<sup>3</sup> Integrated food security phase classification 2020; <http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1152896/?iso3=UGA>

<sup>4</sup> Integrated food security phase classification 2020; <http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1152896/?iso3=UGA>

3<sup>+</sup>) in need of urgent action. Hunger among school going children is high as 66% of the school going children spend a whole day in school without a meal.

Overall, the prevalence of undernourishment remains high with nearly 40% of individuals in Uganda being classified as undernourished, and 16 percent of the households are chronically undernourished. This implies that Ugandans are unable to consume the minimum Required Dietary Intake for light physical activity which is 2,200 kcal and are consuming only an average of 1,860 Kcal per day<sup>5</sup>. Currently, about 1.8 million children aged less than 5 years are stunted. At this pace, by 2030, approximately 11% of the population under five years will be stunted.<sup>6</sup> It's estimated that the anemia levels increased from 49% in 2011 to 53% of children 6-59 months old and 33% of Women of Reproductive Age in 2018.<sup>7</sup>

COVID 19 and its associated preventive standard operating procedures adopted by the government of Uganda worsened the bad situation i.e., 6 out of 10 Ugandans had a worsened food intake, 4 out of 10 households reported having planted less, 7 out of 10 were worried running short of food; 3 out of 4 reported increased food prices.<sup>8</sup>

While healthy foods are lost, the consumption of fast food in Uganda is increasing. Increasingly infants are being fed on artificial formula; at over 30%<sup>9</sup> instead of breast milk. This seemingly cheap and convenient transition to unhealthy fast food is resulting into dire risks related to increase in overweight, obesity and diet-related non-communicable disease notably diabetes, Cardio-vascular diseases (CVD) and Cancer. It is estimated that, 33% of annual deaths are attributed to the five leading NCDs; notably cardiovascular diseases, Cancers, Diabetes and Trauma.<sup>10</sup>

Food safety is a growing concern to the realization of the Right to food in Uganda. Although there are no current statistics generated for the last 6 to 8 years, it is estimated that 1.3 million people in Uganda get affected annually by Unsafe Food and 10% of the population falling sick after eating contaminated food and 420,000 people including 125,000 children under five dying due to consumption of Unsafe food, #Safe Food is indeed everybody's business. Ministry of Health in 2016 estimated that food borne diseases constitutes about 14% of cases treated every year. The most common conditions being typhoid, brucellosis, bacillus dysentery and cholera.<sup>11</sup>

The Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) studies indicated that in Mubende and Kamwenge districts which are among the major maize producing districts in the country, up to 65% and 45% of maize samples respectively contained aflatoxin levels exceeding the Ugandan maximum limit (ML) of 10 ppb for total aflatoxins.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Based on the USAID framework for HDDS for measurement of household food access, the 'average HDDS in the richest 33 percent of households can serve as a guide for setting the target level of HDDS' (Swindale and Bilinsky, 2006); from the UNPS, the average HDDS for this group was estimated at 9.2.

<sup>6</sup> Uganda Household and Demographic Survey: <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR333/FR333.pdf>, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> State of Uganda Population Report <http://npcsec.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/SUPRE-2018-.pdf>, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Kansiiime et al. COVID-19 Implications On Household Income And Food Security In Kenya And Uganda: Findings From a rapid assessment, [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X20303260](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X20303260)

<sup>9</sup>See UBOS & ICF (2018).

<sup>10</sup>WHO. (2018). *Non-communicable diseases country profile – Uganda*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

<sup>11</sup>MOH (2016). *The National Burden Food-Borne Diseases Pilot Study Report*. Kampala: Ministry of Health.

<sup>12</sup>PACA. (2017). *Country-led Aflatoxin and Food Safety Situation Analysis and Action Planning for Uganda: Final Report, Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa*, African Union Commission

Whereas they are millions of people going hungry in Uganda Food loss and waste has remained high due to poor post-harvest handling leading to up to 30-40% food loss in grains and 30-80% for vegetables and fruits. In beans, up to 15% of losses occur at the farm level and 10% losses at the marketing level.<sup>13</sup> Whereas the evidence on food waste is inadequate, it is of growing concern, especially in urban areas.

This situation is mainly caused by;

**Absence of streamlined structural governance of Food in the country.** The Country adopted a multi sectoral approach to food and nutrition. Whereas Thee office of the prime minister was nominated to coordinate nutrition interventions, it holds no legal mandate to coordinate planning, budgeting, financing implementation and tracking performance of food and nutrition. The Country has a wide array of policies and laws touching food but lacks an apex food law streamline all the other laws and establish an institutional framework on food.

**Low implementation and enforcement of the over 1000 food related standards.** The food sector in Uganda has a multitude of standards developed by the national standards body and some have been adopted a regional level. However, the country is dominated by poor developed standards infrastructure and poor quality culture among the citizenry both duty bearers and rights holders. Most medium and small scale processors used nonfood graded technologies and packaging materials.

**The absence of national Strategic Food Reserves:** Whereas the Government of Uganda committed self in the Constitution to among others establish strategic food reserves as a measure of addressing food security, these reserves were instead privatized and currently the country does not have food reserves. This during the COVID - 19 lockdown in 2020 constrained government efforts to fulfil its obligation and provide food to people that could not feed themselves. On both occasions, Government response was not timely, and adequate. The food rations were small and the quality of the food was contested. Similarly, it constrains the management of the food inflation each time it hits the economy.

**Weak Data systems on food and nutrition.** The data systems on food and nutrition are weak to provide timely data to guide decision making. The last country wide food security situation assessment for example was conducted in 2017. The country hardly has timely data of strategic food items produced in the country or on related issues such as food safety, health diets, production and productivity.

**Limited access to agriculture extension services by small scale farmers:** By 2020, government had recruited 4,063 of the initial target of 5,000 extension workers at district and sub county levels.<sup>14</sup> However, the numbers are reducing due to retirement, death, and labor mobility without replacement and current staffing stands at 3,790. On the other hand, funding is still well below the budgetary provision envisaged in the National Agricultural Extension strategy which had anticipated budget increment from UGX 36 Billion in FY 2015/16 to UGX 333 Billion in 2020/21.

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<sup>13</sup>FAO, WFP and IFAD. (2019). *Food loss analysis: causes and solutions – The Republic of Uganda. Beans, maize, and sunflower studies*. Rome.

<sup>14</sup> MAAIF, 2021, Agricultural extension reform implementation in Uganda 2015-2020: achievements, challenges and way forward, a policy brief

**Increased commercialization of agriculture without food security safety measures:** The Third National Development Plan (NDPIII) seeks to decrease the number of subsistence farmers by half. Large scale farmers mainly pursue plantation agriculture mainly in cash crops and livestock. In some regions, smallholder farmers too are venturing into cash crop production for income generation at the expense of food security.

## Recommendations

1. The Government should enact the apex country food law to streamline the structural governance of food and nutrition in the country including coordination of planning budgeting, financing and tracking of performance.
2. Develop and implement a contingency plan for food insecurity including the reestablishment of the National strategic food reserves with a clear role of the State in the governance of these reserves
3. Government should provide purposive budget for agriculture Extension up to the 333bn as suggested by the extension services implementation strategy, this should be protected from budget cuts to avoid disruptions. Further, it should recruit at least 1000 extension workers per year instead of the entire NDP III life span. Each sub county should at least have two workers i.e. for crop and animals and provide enough for non-wage services.
4. Establish and implement robust data systems for agriculture food security and nutrition in the country. The data systems will collect and process timely data that is required for severance, monitoring and making decision of the management of the food resources in the country.
5. Enforce the use of only compliant food safety infrastructure in the food system including the use of food graded technologies and packaging materials.

## Question to the SUR:

1. What measures had the government of Uganda put in place to streamline financing for food and nutrition in the country?
2. Why has government of Uganda found it so hard until today to establish the legal and institutional framework on food and nutrition?
3. Given the experiences of COVID - 19 and the challenges government of Uganda has gone through in fulfilling her obligation to feed the hungry, what strategic measures is government of Uganda putting in place to systematically avoid such limitations in future?

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