



March 09, 2021.

FRA STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2021

THEME-CHOOSE TO CHALLENGE THE ODDS!

Food Rights Alliance stands in solidarity with the world in commemoration of the International Women's Day that comes annually on every 8th day of March.

As we mark this year's celebrations, women in Uganda continue to challenge the odds they are encountering while striving to contribute to Uganda's food system, some of these include limited rights to land ownership, effects of climate change, low access to markets, low access to finance and agricultural inputs. The Country's food system harbors a number of challenges which hinder its performance; these cut across the entire food chain right from production through processing to consumption where issues of poor post-harvest handling methods, inadequate storage facilities, poor technology to facilitate processing etc. remain inadequately attended to!

With a direct impact to women who contribute to over 75% to agricultural production while employing over 80%, such ordeals continue to shrink their livelihood status in almost all aspects- from health, economic prosperity, sustainable development, WASH, food and nutrition security etc. hence issues affecting the performance of women in agricultural production are worth noting. Such phenomena have been further worsened by the gender inequality; that notwithstanding, due to the gender gaps, women have been left behind in regard to decision making- in terms of determining their market and profit share from agricultural harvests, access to farm inputs, access to agricultural financing among others.

Effects of gender-based inequalities and gender stereotyping in access to and control of productive and financial resources further costs Uganda USD 67 million every year as a result of reduced agricultural productivity of women. Closing the gender gap could lift as many as 119,000 people in Uganda.ⁱ Further, the poor service delivery in the WASH sector where women continue to suffer under the distress of low access to WASH facilities- spending up to six hours every day fetching water, equally exposes them to threats of violence and health hazardsⁱⁱ. Given, the inequitable division of gender roles, the burden of workload for women precipitates domestic violence due to unrealistic demands by men.

Additionally, with the continued acts of not prioritizing women in matters that highly contribute to the food chain- consequences are being seen trickling down to the household level hence affecting both children and other vulnerable groups, as such; the status of food security in the country is slowly deteriorating with stunting rates at 29%- though below the 30% World Health Organization threshold of a nourished community, wasting also stands at 4%ⁱⁱⁱ and 32% women



of reproductive age are equally anemic. This undermines efforts to prevent malnutrition especially during the first 1000 days window of opportunity.

Recalling, that the government of the republic of Uganda has taken greater strides in improving our food system while solving the challenges women face through policy and institutional formulation, it cannot be overemphasized that a lot still needs to be done in order to revamp our food system. The advent of COVID 19 in March 2020 here in Uganda aggravated the already fragile food system hence needs to strengthen it is imperative.

It is therefore our perceived recommendation that the government of Uganda through the respective Ministries, Departments and Agencies expedites the promotion of agro-food system transformation and inclusive economic growth, agricultural productivity also needs to increase, while enhancing the resilience of agriculture production systems and rural livelihoods to climate and market risks.

Achieving agriculture productivity growth and resilience requires government to invest in better technology, land tenure security and sound land management practices tailored towards addressing issues affecting women who are at the forefront but also greatly participate along the entire food chain as they strive to contribute towards building of a resilient food system hence contributing to National development.

As we commemorate the International Women's Day, We the Civil Society Organizations advocating for the right to adequate food stand firm with women in agricultural production as we amplify their voices before the duty bearers to address the issues that are hindering their performance in the sector. It is also our modest desire to petition the duty bearers to attend to the issues affecting women's' participation in food system as a country since this greatly contributes to both human and National development.

For More Information, Contact
Food Rights Alliance
Plot 81 Muteesa 1 Road - Namirembe
P.O. Box 5796, Kampala-Uganda
Tel: +256 - 414 695 518, 0706535722, 0788104782
Email: frauganda@gmail.com

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[Women in Agriculture - Global agriculture](#)

ii [WATER AND SANITATION GENDER STRATEGY 2018-2022](#)

[NDP III - National Planning Authority](#)

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