



REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES.

**MEDIA STATEMENT ON THE WORLD FOOD DAY, 16TH
OCTOBER 2024.**

BY

**HON. FRED BWINO KYAKULAGA (MP)
MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE**

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Ladies and Gentlemen of the press,

Distinguished guests,

and Fellow Ugandans,

1. Introduction

It is my honour to address you today as we prepare to commemorate the 44th World Food Day that is observed every year on 16th October. This day is not only a global commemoration but also a moment for us in Uganda to reflect on the progress we have made in the fight against hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition. Agriculture continues to play a pivotal role in our nation's development, and the objectives of this day align closely with our national agenda for ensuring food security and improving livelihoods.

This year's theme: **“Right to Foods for a Better Life and a Better Future.”** reminds us that access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food is not merely an aspiration—it is a fundamental human right. It also highlights the need for collaborative efforts between government, farmers, the private sector, civil society, and all Ugandans to ensure that every citizen has access to food that is essential for their health and well-being.

The national event will be hosted at the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO's) National Semi-Arid Resources Research Institute (NaSARRI) in Serere District. NaSARRI beholds a rich history spanning 102 years of pioneering agricultural research in Uganda. This institution has played an invaluable role in reviving **orphaned crops** like **millet and sorghum**, which are critical for food security, particularly in the semi-arid regions of our country. Sorghum, in particular, has been identified as beneficial for **diabetic patients**, as it helps reduce blood sugar levels. These crops are also rich in vital nutrients, ensuring that we not only have enough to eat but also eat well to live healthier lives. NaSARRI's work exemplifies the connection between **agricultural research and the right to food**, as they develop resilient crop varieties that meet the nutritional needs of our population while ensuring food security for future generations.

2. Significant Achievements in Agriculture

As we prepare to celebrate this important day, I am proud to note the remarkable achievements we have made in the agricultural sector, which remains the backbone of our economy. Its also important to note that agriculture contributed

24% to our GDP and provided employment to about 70% of our population. Through the leadership of H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and targeted government interventions, we have made significant strides, which I will highlight:

- **Increased Agricultural Production:**

With the promotion of improved seed varieties that are disease- and pest-resistant, we have seen increased resilience against climate shocks. Crops such as coffee, beans, maize, cassava, groundnuts, millet, and rice, among others are now yielding higher, ensuring food security for our farmers and their communities.

- **Irrigation and Mechanization:**

Our investment in irrigation schemes such as Doho, Mubuku, and Agoro has enabled farmers to produce food year-round, independent of seasonal rainfall. Additionally, mechanization hubs have made farming more efficient, empowering farmers across the country.

- **Strategic Interventions in Fisheries and Aquaculture:**

We continue to grow our fisheries and aquaculture sectors, ensuring that fish—an essential source of protein—is available and affordable for Ugandans. The establishment of fish landing sites and the promotion of aquaculture have improved livelihoods while strengthening food security.

- **Post-Harvest Management and Value Addition:**

Reducing post-harvest losses remains a priority for the government. We have supported the establishment of agro-processing plants, ensuring that farmers can maximize the value of their produce and contribute to food security through value addition.

- **Agricultural Research and Innovation:**

Our research institutions, led by the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) have been instrumental in developing improved, climate-resilient crop varieties. These institutions ensure that our agricultural systems remain adaptive to challenges while providing food that meets the nutritional needs of our people.

3. Challenges and the Way Forward

While we celebrate these achievements, we must also address the emerging challenges. Climate change poses a serious threat to food production, and its impacts are already being felt in the form of erratic weather patterns, prolonged droughts, and floods. The government is committed to increasing investments in climate-smart agriculture, irrigation, and sustainable water use to mitigate these effects.

We also need to address malnutrition, especially among vulnerable groups, such as children and women. The government will continue to promote the cultivation and consumption of nutritious food, ensuring that every Ugandan can lead a healthy and productive life. NARO had led the way in researching and releasing crop varieties with enhanced nutritious value like potatoes, beans, banana among others.

4. Call to Action

On this World Food Day, I call upon all Ugandans to unite in our mission to achieve food security for everyone. Farmers, I urge you to embrace modern, sustainable agricultural practices. The private sector is encouraged to continue investing in value addition and agro-processing. And our development partners, civil society, and the general public—let us work together to promote nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food safety systems.

5. Conclusion,

I thank our partners Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), WFP, Food Rights Alliance, World Food Programme, IFAD, World Bank and the European Union among others for their continued dedication and contributions to ensuring food, Animal Feed and Nutrition security in Uganda.

Together, we can ensure that every Ugandan enjoys the right to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food—building a better life today and a brighter future for generations to come.

I thank you.

For God and My Country

Fred Bwino Kyakulaga (MP)
MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE