

## **OPEN LETTER FROM CENTRE FOR FOOD AND ADEQUATE LIVING RIGHTS (CEFROHT) TO THE PRIME MINISTER**

Office of the Prime Minister,  
P.O Box 341,  
Plot 2-1 A-C Sir Apollo Kagga Road,  
Kampala, Uganda.

Dear Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Robina Nabbanja,

### **RE: AN OPEN LETTER ON FOOD INSECURITY IN KARAMOJA REGION.**

As a Civil Society Organization whose approach is a food system approach using human rights, we commend the government's emergence response towards the Karamoja region food insecurity turmoil by allocating a sum of 135b, seeds and seedlings and other development partners. We know that the current food crisis in Karamoja alone has left 518,000 people starving, where 91,000 are prone to acute malnutrition, and 9,500 pregnant or lactating mothers are acutely malnourished and are in need of treatment. Given the above, hundreds have been reported to have died whereas thousands are in dire situations of facing starvation. Unlike the past food insecurity incidences, all districts have been hit to the worst.

Although that is the case, we believe that the response is not sustainable and given the recurring food insecurity situation in the whole country which stems from the omission to ensure availability, accessibility and adequacy of food as a right for everyone. We would like to express our concerns as rooted in the legal frameworks; that every Ugandan has a fundamental right to adequate food as guaranteed under Article 20 of the constitution. Yet the same is related to a number of rights like the right to life, health, freedom from hunger malnutrition and a inhuman and degrading treatment. This however does not mean a right to be fed but a system " where every man, woman and child, alone or in the community with others, have physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement."

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1945 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) are all to the effect that everyone has a right to an adequate standard of living including adequate food and being free from hunger. Uganda committed to the Sustainable Development Goals squarely to end hunger and malnutrition. The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community to which Uganda is a party, implores state parties under Article 110 to establish strategic food reserves.

Similarly, the Constitution of Uganda 1995 clearly set out to take appropriate steps to encourage people to grow and store adequate food and establish national food reserves.

It is our humble opinion that establishing national food reserves should be considered urgently if Uganda is to meet the international, regional and national commitments of achieving an adequate standard of living among its citizens. As a food basket, Uganda should be taking on opportunities to supply food to the world due to the global crisis instead.

Secondly, we argue that the food supplied to the starving people be tested because Uganda has high levels of aflatoxins. We base this on the food insecurity challenges during COVID-19 pandemic where 38% of the sampled food was contaminated.

Because of the ongoing food crisis spreading all over the country causing insurmountable levels of hunger and panic we request for an urgent consideration of the establishment of food collection centers as an initiative controlled at local government level. This is because of the high rate of food loss and food waste due to the disproportionate food sequence in Uganda yet many good spirited people are willing to donate food. On the broad scale, government should declare all L.C 1 offices as food collection centers for people who can't afford food for the whole country because of the increasing acute food insecurity in country wide. On the same note, government should gazette emergence food support centers in Karamoja. Learning from the previous catastrophes, OPM should urgently declare guidelines which food donors in Uganda should use to avoid any food contamination, poisoning and delays.

CEFROHT also advises OPM to use media centers of wide coverage to issue food alerts for the whole country on a weekly basis. This is urgently needed because crop growth failure in the country is attributed to the long dry spell. As a strategy to mitigate skyrocketing prices of food, we implore the OPM to declare incentives for food players including traders. OPM (as the nutrition coordinator in the country) must now make sure that all laws that regulate food are used as guidance and implemented e.g. public health Act, Food Act and the Penal Code Act.

Therefore, the right to food is the right to feed oneself in dignity. It is the right to have continuous access to the resources that will enable you to produce, earn or purchase enough food to not only prevent hunger, but also to ensure health and well-being.

### **Urgent call to government**

1. Provide immediate food support to all starving vulnerable persons.
2. Publish in the national gazette the distribution criteria of the food support
3. Issue national guidance for food donation and support
4. The Uganda National Bureau of Standards should immediately test all food donations and guide the country on the process
5. Immediately embark on the establishment of the national food reserves as required under the constitution and the EAC Treaty
6. Start monthly food status and warning reports in the entire country
7. Provide all acute food insecure communities and families with early maturing seeds and food preservation skills

Ensure and provide a plan on access to water and cooking energy in communities in acute food insecurity.

We look forward to your positive response .

**Yours Sincerely,**

**Centre for Food and Adequate Living Rights (CEFROHT)**