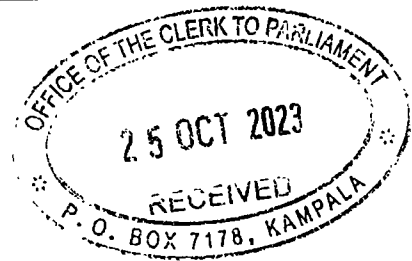




The Republic of Uganda



**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND  
FISHERIES**

**STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON WORLD FOOD DAY**

**OCTOBER 25, 2023**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

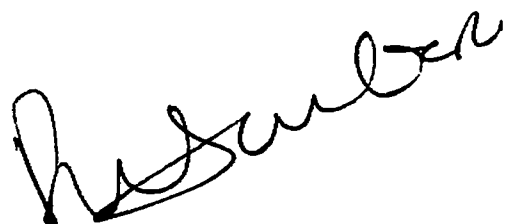
- 1.1 Rt. Hon Speaker and Hon. Colleagues, Uganda joined the rest of the World to Commemorate the 43<sup>rd</sup> World Food Day on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023. This year's event was celebrated at the National Coffee Research Institute in Kituza – Mukono under the theme ***“Water is life. Water is food. Leave no one behind”***.

## 2.0 ABOUT WORLD FOOD DAY

- 2.1 Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Members, as you may be aware, every 16<sup>th</sup> day of October, the Global Community joins together to celebrate the World Food Day calling on everyone (government, academia, civil society, private sector and individuals from the various sectors of society) to rally against hunger and build sustainable food security.
- 2.2 The event raises awareness and action for those who suffer from hunger and for the need to ensure food and nutrition security for all.
- 2.3 World Food Day also coincides with the founding of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations.

## 3.0 This year's event and theme:

- 3.1 Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Members, the 2023 World Food Day was celebrated under the theme ***“Water is Life. Water is Food. Leave No One Behind”*** recognizing that water is essential for life on earth.



**3.2** Water makes up over 50% of our bodies and covers about 71% of the earth's surface. However, only about 2.5% of the water is fresh and suitable for drinking, agriculture and most industrial uses.

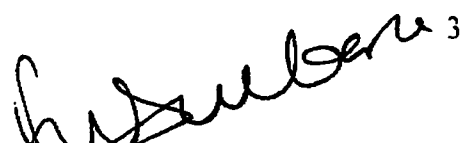
**3.3** While fresh water remains a critical driving force for people, economies and nature, and a foundation of our food, like any other resource, it is not infinite. With the increasing population and human activity as well as climate changes, water resources are increasingly under stress. It is no wonder that over 2.4 billion of the global population is living in water-stressed areas. It is for this reason the Ministry of Agriculture is promoting Climate Smart sustainable Agriculture by placing emphasis on optimal use of water resources.

**3.4** Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Colleagues, you are aware that water is integral to our production processes and this is also mirrored in the Ministry of Agriculture's efforts to increase on-farm water access to as many water stressed areas as possible so that our people are not solely dependent on rain-fed agriculture.

#### **4.0 NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS**

**4.1** Rt. Hon. Speaker and Colleagues, as earlier highlighted, national celebrations were held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 at the National Coffee Research Institute at Kituuza, Mukono.

**4.2** The main event was preceded by a number of activities including the Coffee night recognizing the importance of coffee to Uganda and aimed at promoting the coffee drinking culture

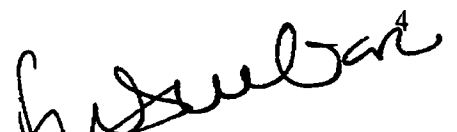
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among Ugandans. Before we look to external markets for our coffee, we need to boost a sustainable domestic market.

- 4.3** The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries was joined by a number of key partners/stakeholders including the European Union, the Food and Agricultural Organization, World Food programme, Colleague members of Parliament led by the Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture and MAAIF agencies especially NARO the Hosts and Uganda Coffee Development Authority.
- 4.4** A number of exhibitions were organized showcasing research and value added products like coffee, cocoa rice, millet, sweet potatoes as well as simple machinery.
- 4.5** I commissioned a multi-purpose coffee and cocoa laboratory funded by Government of Uganda at a cost of Ugx.5Bn at Kituuza to provide permanent solutions to pests and diseases as well as other constraints affecting production and productivity of the two crops.

## **5.0 MAJOR HIGHLIGHT OF THE DAY**

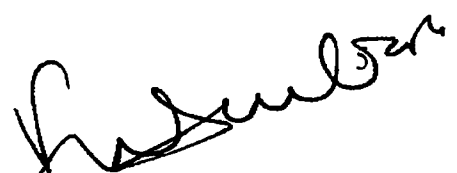
Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Colleagues, on the same day, we witnessed the release of new crop varieties successfully developed by our NARO scientists. I call this a major highlight because it's usually a great breakthrough for researchers. Just like its only joy and happiness to a mother who delivers a healthy bouncing baby after nine months of pregnancy, so it is for a researcher who spends a lot of time with countless hours in the lab, in the fields and in trials incubating, grafting and



testing a new crop variety. When such a variety is eventually tested and passes all the protocols as set by the National variety release committee which eventually gives it a permit for release, it becomes a great scientific milestone registered. This is always a great scientific breakthrough for researchers, farmers and the entire country. In line with this, NARO's focus is on producing climate smart and resilient, early maturing crop/seed varieties.

Rt. Hon. Speaker and colleagues, it's these varieties that will sustain our food systems. The newly released varieties are:

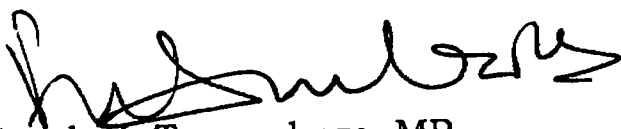
- 5.1.1** Two maize varieties i.e. NAROMAIZE 63 PVA an orange maize breed rich in Vitamin A and NAROMAIZE 64STR with inherent characteristics for striga resistance.
- 5.1.2** Two sweet potato varieties i.e. NAROSPOT 6 and NAROSPOT 7. These have orange flesh, rich in vitamin A and are suitable for food and confectionary industries (bread and cake making) and will reduce on wheat usage.
- 5.1.3** A new rice variety developed under code KF20039 which is aromatic and adaptable in lowland areas.
- 5.1.4** Lablab (pasture variety) released as NARO Lablab 1 with a high protein content and is expected to reduce on the ratio and/or replace soybean that has been depended on as a main ingredient for livestock feed (yet very expensive) and has high competition for use as food for humans.

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**6.0** Rt. Hon. Speaker and Colleagues, allow me to inform you that our agricultural research scientists under NARO are doing great innovations. They have developed products and prototypes that if funded and fully commercialized will solve bottlenecks of different enterprises' value chain stages. The committee of Agriculture has visited some of the NARO stations and have been impressed with phenomenal innovations. I take this opportunity to invite the leadership of parliament and all members to plan with us visits to these NARO stations so that you can see, believe and support in making a strong case for funding NARO.

**6.1** From Policy makers, to researchers, to multipliers, to off-takers, distributors, retailers and farmers who produce the various foods we consume, we each have a role to play in ensuring not only adequate but safe food for all. Together we can build sustainable food, feed and nutrition security.

I thank you Rt. Hon. Speaker and Colleagues and I beg to submit!



Frank K. Tumwebaze, MP

**MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES**