

STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RURAL WOMEN 2021.

Background:

The International Day of Rural Women was established by the *General Assembly in its resolution 62/136 of 18 December 2007* that recognizes the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty. It's also an explicit recognition of [rural women's] economic contribution to the development of their communities, in particular with regard to the unpaid work they perform.

The idea of honoring rural women with a special day was put forward by international NGOs at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. It was suggested that 15 October be celebrated as "World Rural Women's Day," on the eve of World Food Day, in order to highlight the role played by rural women in food production and food security¹.

It's on this note that LANDnet Uganda and the Women's Land Rights Movement joins the rest of the world to commemorate this day in recognition of the very critical role that women play in food security, and building agricultural and rural development worldwide even amidst the unpredictable climatic changes.

This year's national theme is: "**Food security amidst climate change: Building resilience for rural women**" underscores the resilience, bravery, and reliability of women during various crises that have befallen Uganda including the impacts of harsh climate change.

It's worth noting that women form a disproportionately large share of the poor in countries all over the world. Women in rural areas and more so in developing countries are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood, because of their responsibility to secure water, food and energy for cooking and heating. The effects of climate change, including drought, uncertain rainfall and deforestation, make it harder to secure these resources.

Therefore, as the world faces an increasingly critical need to address climate change, the important role that rural women and girls have on building resilience is undeniable. Women interact more with nature while ensuring food security and household nutrition, as evidenced by the high burden of unpaid care and domestic responsibilities that they

¹ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/>

shoulder. Women also collect biomass fuels, manually process food materials, and pump water; eighty percent of households without piped water rely on women and girls for water collection.

Further, Women make a significant contribution towards natural resource management, safeguarding traditional knowledge, biodiversity and building climate resilience. They are at the frontline when natural resources and agriculture are threatened especially in situations of poverty, because the majority of the world's poor are women who are more reliant on the natural resources especially land for their sustenance and livelihoods but further because of their little ability and capacity to respond to natural hazards, such as droughts, landslides, floods, pests and disease and wild fires².

Though world leaders have committed to gender equality in climate change policy and response, progress has still been slow, We call upon responsible stakeholders and duty bearers to ensure that there are deliberate efforts to tap into but also enhance the local response knowledge of the rural women on issues like sustainable resource management and leading sustainable practices at the household and community levels. Work towards Ensuring that Women's unequal participation in decision-making processes and labour markets compound inequalities that often prevent women from fully contributing to climate-related planning, policy-making and implementation are dealt with.

In conclusion therefore, is a call to action to all human races to protect our mothers, daughters, sisters grandmothers who bear the burden of food security To ensure that the harsh effects of climate change are prevented and averted for sustainable development. Relevant authorities need to ensure that the rural women are involved in the decision making processes since they are the directly affected from policies and strategies put forward. There should be approaches aimed at reducing and managing the causes of climate change and disasters generally. There is a need to first understand how climate change affects different women and then build gender related but specific capacities of the rural women and stop looking at them as victims of climate change but rather agents of change by strengthening gender-specific capacities. Women's economic empowerment is a very strong approach to building resilience of rural women.

As we commemorate this special month and day of rural women, we call upon the Government of Uganda, the broader civil society, all well-wishers and lovers of women and girls, to rally behind efforts that aim at economically empowering and support rural women

² <https://unfccc.int/gender>



and girls and grow their capacities to respond to climate change and enhance agricultural production, food security, and natural resources management.