

OXFAM IN UGANDA

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OXFAM

GOVERNMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY INTENSIFY FIGHT AGAINST HIGH AFLATOXIN LEVELS IN FOOD



Lilian Badaru, a shopkeeper in Arua district, displaying some of the items in her retail shop. [Oxfam | 2021]

The Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), in collaboration with the Grain Council Uganda (TGCU), Uganda National Farmer's Federation (UNFFE), Food rights Alliance (FRA), PELUM, and ESAFF embarked on a campaign to fight against the high Aflatoxin levels in food, to promote consumption of safe food in the country.

The efforts, supported by Oxfam, came at a time when the world was celebrating World Food Safety Day 2022, under the theme: Safer food, better health.

The campaign against high levels of Aflatoxins is aimed at creating awareness about this poison and training all stakeholders in the value chains, right from the farm to the final consumer, on how to handle food to avoid Aflatoxin contamination.

In a [press statement](#), partners called for joint efforts from farmers, transporters, traders, manufacturers, Civil Society Organizations, the private sector, regulators, and the consumers to join the fight against high Aflatoxin levels in food.

"Together, we call upon the government, development agencies and other stakeholders to increase support to the value chains through research, extension, training, promotion of cooperatives, awareness and assistance in

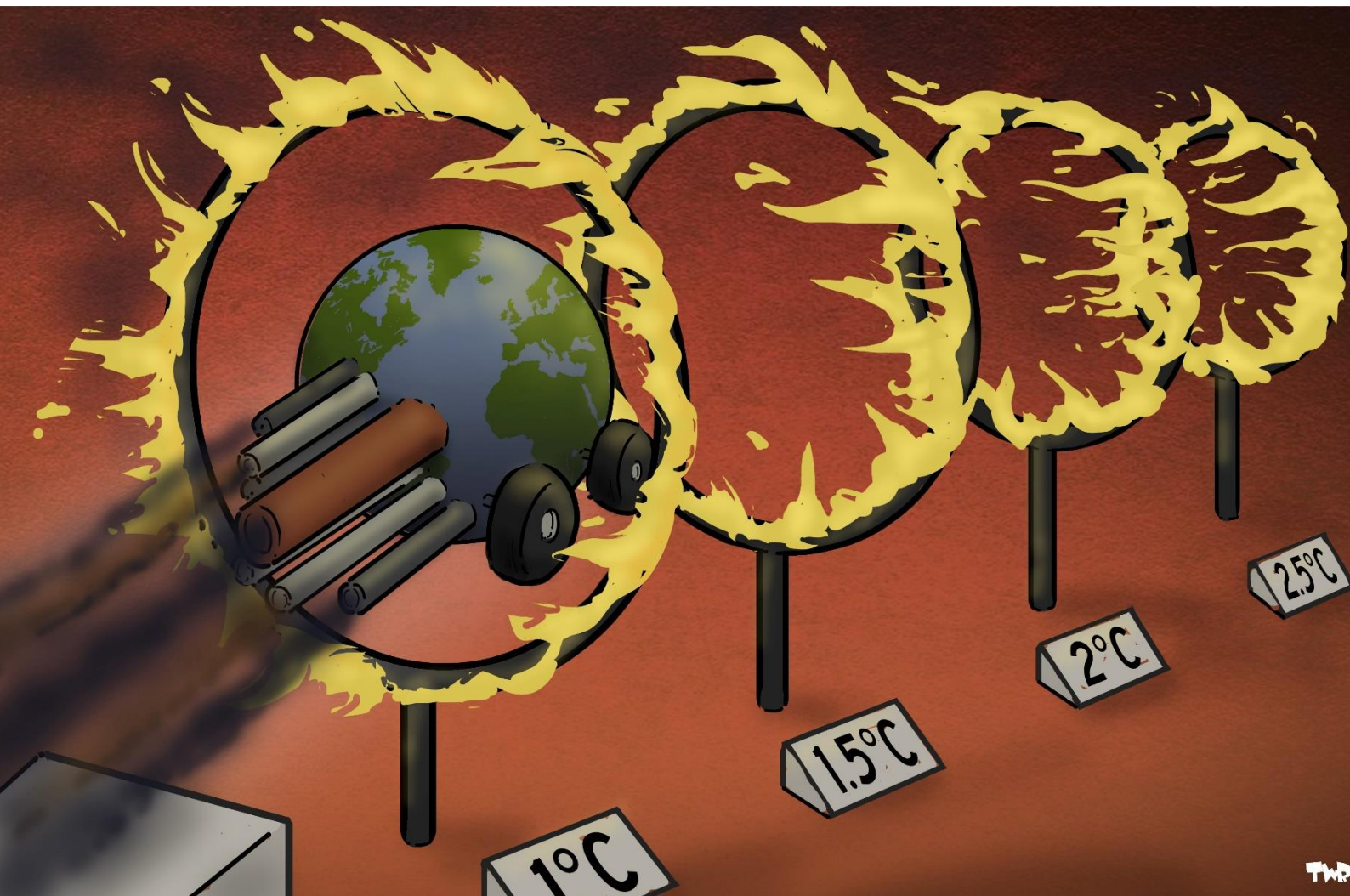
detecting and preventing aflatoxin so that foods produced and traded are safe for human and animal consumption and consequently increase household incomes, improve food security and improve the quality of life as per the NDP III Goal," the press statement reads.

Speaking at the press briefing, Mr. Francis Shanty Odokorach, Country Director, Oxfam in Uganda, emphasized Oxfam's commitment to supporting different players, including farmers, to guarantee safe and quality food and food products.

"Oxfam's programming is structured towards among others, securing smallholders seeds security, land rights, capacity to adapt to climate change effects, SMEs development and strengthening value chains to be inclusive, progressive, and sustainable. We believe with this, farmers are able to make informed choices about agricultural practices that guarantee safe and quality products," said Mr. Odokorach.

Aflatoxins are poisonous substances produced by moulds when they attack produce that is not well-dried. High levels of Aflatoxins contaminate food crops like Cereals, legumes, oil crops and others, posing a serious health threat to humans and livestock. According to research, consuming foods with high aflatoxins levels increases the risk of contracting liver cancer and other related diseases, which could lead to death.

OXFAM CALLS FOR FAIR FINANCE FOR LOSS AND DAMAGE IN AN ERA OF ESCALATING CLIMATE IMPACTS



“Human activity has created a world 1.1°C warmer than pre-industrial levels, and we are now scandalously on course to overshoot the 1.5°C safety threshold,” said Gabriela Bucher, Oxfam Executive Director. [Oxfam | 2022]

A new Oxfam report, [Footing The Bill](#), has revealed that 26 million people are forced into poverty every year because of natural disasters and humanitarian crisis linked to extreme weather requires funding nine times today than what they were 20 years ago.

Climate change is at crisis levels, doing irreversible harm to people and our planet, and leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. While the wealthiest in the world contribute most to climate change, the poorest and most marginalized pay the highest price.

An important indicator of rising climate impacts and associated loss and damage is the increasing humanitarian need. As climate change escalates, the humanitarian system is being put under increasing strain and is unable to adequately respond.

Oxfam’s research also estimates that over the past five years, UN humanitarian appeals linked to extreme weather were only 54% funded on average, resulting in an estimated funding shortfall of \$28–\$33bn.

According to Oxfam, an effective system to address loss and damage must include a new finance facility to govern action.

Reform of existing humanitarian and development institutions remains crucial, as these will continue to play a role, both in building resilience to climate shocks and saving lives in the wake of climate-linked emergencies.

A facility is vital to ensure financing is not business as usual. It must be additional to aid budgets, automatic and based on the ‘polluter pays’ principle.

A facility is also needed to elevate political attention, drive greater action and bolster coordination across a fragmented and disparate landscape of relevant institutions.

After years of stalemate, the establishment of a finance facility would also help developing countries trust that fair and far-reaching reform has begun.

As part of the call, Oxfam amplified the voices of those most affected by the impact of climate change in various African countries like families that have lost their property and livelihoods in the recurring Kasese floods in Uganda .

ISINGIRO DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CALL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION



Mr. Emmanuel Bwengye, the Isingiro District Environmental Officer, giving remarks during the World Environment Day celebrations in Nakivale Refugee Settlement. [Oxfam | 2022]

Isingiro district officials have urged refugees and host communities to step up and save their environment.

Speaking during the celebration of the World Environment Day in Rubondo sub basecamp in Nakivale settlement, Isingiro District, Mr. Emmanuel Bwengye, Isingiro district Natural Resources Officer, urged communities to desist from encroaching on wetlands but instead plant more trees and take care of them until they grow.

Ms. Justine Gonza, the Assistant Refugee Commandant for Rubondo Sub base camp also discouraged refugees from cutting trees from the hills surrounding the settlement citing that this practice would lead to flooding if there were no trees to stop the water from sloping down to their houses.

Ms. Anita Nassasira, a Project Coordinator at Nsamizi, also emphasized the need for collective action in conserving the environment.

World Environment Day was celebrated with a number of activities including a clean-up of Rubondo zone, planting of trees, and community sensitization on the importance of protecting the environment.

These activities were led by the Environment Committee members within their communities who also encouraged refugees and host communities to conserve the environment by carrying out agricultural practices like crop integration.

The World Environment Day 2022 celebrations were organized by Oxfam in partnership with Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE), Nsamizi, Office of the Prime Minister, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Environment Committees within Nakivale Settlement and the Environment Club of Kabazana Primary School.

World Environment Day is marked every year on June 5. The aim of World Environment Day is to provide a platform for unified action on a global scale in order to protect, restore and honour our precious planet. The 2022 theme of World Environment Day was Only One Earth.

USAFI REFUGEE GROUP IS COMMITTED TO WASTE MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Mirindi Murega (R) shows off one of the plastic dustbins made by Usafi Group in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Isingiro district. [Oxfam | 2022]

The Usafi Nakivale group in Nakivale Refugee Settlement is composed of refugees from Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, and some Ugandan nationals. It was formed in 2017 by Mirindi Murega, a 46 year Congolese refugee of Nakivale Settlement.

Mirindi mobilized over 800 youth and conducted a community meeting to discuss the rising health concerns within the settlement which had become unbearable and visibly disturbing. "Our health center was always filled to capacity and some people would wait for hours in long lines to get treatment," explained Mirindi.

During the meeting, the youth decided to start picking rubbish and waste from the streets and households to try and instill some semblance of hygiene within their communities.

The Office of the Prime Minister provided the group with a dumping site to aid in their quest to manage waste within the settlement. In 2019, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) supported the group

with equipment including wheelbarrows, spades, pangas, slashers, gumboots and gloves.

This boosted the group's morale to continue collecting waste from 4 zones in the refugee settlement. Despite the group's efforts however, communities remained littered with waste.

In February 2022, the group received training from Oxfam on separating plastic from other wastes, and re using the plastic to make other materials including dustbins in order to save and conserve the environment.

After the training, Oxfam provided the group with equipment needed to make the plastic dustbins including wires, card boards, and pliers.

The group, which currently consists of 107 members, began collecting plastics from designated places like shops, events, offices, and other places within the refugee settlement to make plastic dustbins. They have so far made 10 dustbins and freely distributed them in strategic places within the settlement for refugees to use.

CSOS CAUTION GOVERNMENT ON RISING PUBLIC DEBT



Representatives of Civil Society Organizations during the CSO Post- Budget dialogue held in Kampala on 23rd June 2022. [Courtesy Photo | 2022]

Hon. Matia Kasaija, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, presented Uganda's National Budget 2022/23 to Members of Parliament and the public on 14th June 2022.

While reading the budget, Hon. Kasaija put Uganda's public debt stock—as of December 2021—at Shs73.5 trillion. Of this, he added that external debt amounted to Shs45.72 trillion and domestic debt Shs27.8 trillion.

Speaking at a post-budget event held in Kampala on June 23, Mr. Julius Mukunda, the Executive Director of the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) urged the government to manage the country's growing debt to avoid compromising service delivery.

Mr. Mukunda also added that the government should prioritise implementation of the domestic revenue mobilisation strategies through exploring the untapped potential revenue sources such as the digital economy and strengthening tax systems and administration – this would widen the narrow tax base.

In an interview with the Daily Monitor, Mr. Richard Ssempala, the Finance for Development Coordinator at Oxfam in Uganda recommended that heavy reliance on public debt should be discouraged especially in the short run. Mr. Ssempala warned that Uganda's current rate of borrowing is likely to have deteriorating economic growth figures partly because it adversely affects investment.

Since dividends are to be yielded in the long run, Mr. Ssempala suggested that priority should be given to only such projects that have the potential to unlock Uganda's productivity challenges.

During the budget speech however, Hon. Kasaija said that Uganda's debt is still sustainable.

"Although our public debt has increased faster compared to past trends, it is sustainable in relation to the size of the economy. Measuring public debt in relation to the size of the economy is a standard practice to know whether or not our debt is sustainable," said Hon. Kasaija.

OXFAM CALLS FOR POLITICAL WILL TO PROTECT REFUGEES' RIGHTS



Ala and Nakiro, learners at Awich Primary School in Palabek Refugee Settlement, Lamwo district. Ala and Nakiro are South Sudanese refugees who have been able to complete their education through Oxfam's Building Resilience in Crisis through Education (BRICE) Project. [Oxfam | 2020]

In Uganda, refugees are welcomed with an open door policy. They can move around without restriction, work, set up their own businesses, and have equal access to social services. However, this is not the norm in many parts of the world.

On World Refugee Day, celebrated on 20th July to recognize the resilience of refugees and encourage people who have been forced to flee their home countries to escape conflict or persecution, Using Uganda as one of the Countries with progressive refugees policy, Oxfam called on leaders and governments across the globe to step up and support all refugees equally. (please hyperlink the Oxfam called - with the video link)

Since 2016, Oxfam has been responding to the refugee influx caused by the conflicts in South Sudan. Oxfam has also been responding to the refugee crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo after conflict broke out in the country, forcing many people to flee.

Oxfam's interventions are in the refugee settlements of Bidibidi, Imvepi, Rhino Camp, Omugo, Palabek in Northern Uganda; as well as in Kyaka II and Nakivale refugee settlement in South Western Uganda.

As part of capacity strengthening, the response is done alongside local and national humanitarian actors.

Since 2006, Oxfam has a standing global Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on Strategic Partnership, and one with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) which facilitates joint planning, preparedness and response to predictable and rapid refugee emergency situations. The areas of response are in various sectors such as WASH, Livelihood, cash-based interventions, resource mobilisation and advocacy.

Oxfam's humanitarian response plans are developed in close coordination with OPM especially at district level.

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