

Civil Society Press Statement

Theme: "Safeguarding Health, Environment, and Market Access through Safe Agrochemical Management"

April, 9th 2026, Kampala

Venue: SEATINI Offices, Bukoto-Kampala

We, the undersigned Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), committed to promoting sustainable agricultural trade, quality assurance, product safety, food safety, nutrition and food sovereignty, climate-responsive mechanisms, gender justice, biodiversity conservation, human and environmental health, and economic sustainability, commend the Government through the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) for initiating a structured scientific and consultative process that has led to the restriction, or withdrawal of selected active ingredients (nine molecules phased out and nine molecules restricted) of concern.

This action, taken in response to evidence linking these chemicals to adverse human and animal (livestock and wildlife) health outcomes, as well as environmental risks including carcinogenic effects demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding public health and environmental integrity while enhancing the credibility of Uganda's agri-food products in regional and international markets.

Uganda has experienced a rapid increase in pesticide use, more than doubling from 2,990 tonnes in 2010 to 6,010 tonnes in 2022 (FAO, 2022), with import values reaching \$75.87 million in 2022. Alarming, a significant proportion of registered agrochemicals are classified as hazardous under international standards.

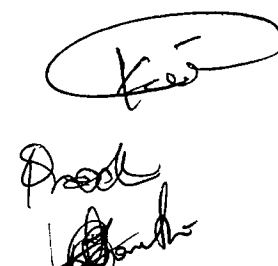
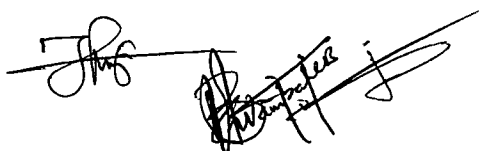
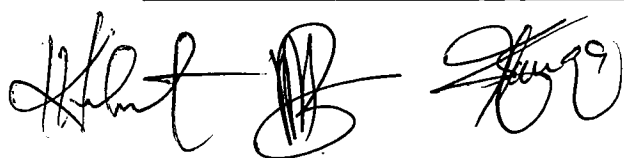
Scientific studies in Uganda have documented pesticide residues in water, food, air, and human biological samples such as urine and breast milk. Misuse and unsafe application driven by limited technical capacity, inadequate adherence to post-harvest intervals, and low utilization of personal protective equipment exacerbate exposure risks.¹ Children's smaller body size make them especially vulnerable, with exposure potentially ten times more toxic than that of adults. Additionally, expectant and breastfeeding mothers are equally affected.²

The presence of residues from Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs), including substances banned in their countries of origin, highlights both regulatory gaps and the need for enhanced enforcement and farmer education. Mismanagement of pesticides undermines food security, livelihoods, nutrition, and trade, with Uganda losing over USD 60 million in export revenues in 2020 due to pesticide residue violations (UBOS, 2021).

Scientific evidence from Uganda has documented the presence of pesticide residues in community water sources, food products, and air, as well as in human biological samples such as urine and breast milk. These exposures are largely attributed to the

¹ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35846167/>

² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35846167/>



misuse and unsafe application of pesticides, driven by limited trader and farmer and chemical vendors' technical capacity, inadequate adherence to post-harvest intervals, and low utilization of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) contrary to the Agricultural Chemicals (Control) Act. Of particular concern is the detection of residues from Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs), some of which are prohibited in their countries of origin.

Notably, in 2024, the critical review and analysis by the Food Safety Coalition of Uganda established that approximately 65.5% of registered agrochemicals in Uganda are banned in their countries of origin (FoSCU, 2024), underscoring significant regulatory and public health gaps.

Proper management of pesticides is therefore essential not only to protect human and animal health and the environment health but also to safeguard the economic viability of Ugandan agriculture in regional and global markets.

We recognise Uganda's commitment to safe agrochemical management is supported by a strong legal and policy framework for instance:

- Uganda is a signatory to international conventions including the Rotterdam, Stockholm, and Montreal Conventions, which protect human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals.
- The Constitution of Uganda 1995 Article 39 provides for the right to a clean and healthy environment, access to safe water (Objective XXI), and food security (Objective XXII).
- The Agricultural Chemicals (Control) Act, Cap. 35 (as amended), provides a regulatory framework for the manufacture, storage, distribution, and trade of agricultural chemicals.

While these frameworks provide a solid foundation, we note implementation gaps, particularly in enforcement, regulation, and resource allocation, which need to be addressed to ensure effective risk mitigation.

We note that Uganda's recent actions align with ongoing regional efforts to strengthen pesticide regulation, including Kenya's 2025 withdrawal of 77 pesticide products and the restriction of 200 others³, as well as Tanzania's⁴ recent ban on 805 hazardous pesticides. At the global level, the European Union enforces rigorous pesticide registration and monitoring standards, reflecting the increasing recognition of the health, environmental, and trade risks associated with Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs).

In order to implement this government directive and progressively comply with regional and global commitments as stated above, we call upon the following institutions to take action:

³ Kenya Bans 279 Harmful Pesticide Products In Crack Down

⁴ Tanzania pulls 805 hazardous pesticides off market, enforces import ban – TNC

[Signature]

[Multiple signatures]

1. Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) – Directorate of Crop Inspection and Certification

- Issue a national gazette notice detailing recalled and restricted pesticides, compliance timelines, and updates to the National Agrochemical Register.
- Train extension workers and farmers on Integrated Pest Management (IPM), safe agrochemical handling, and identification of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs).
- Conduct public awareness campaigns emphasizing risk-based guidance, avoiding panic and ensuring continuity of agricultural production.
- Strengthen market surveillance and inspection systems to eliminate counterfeit, substandard, and banned products.
- Support exporters in meeting sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements, reducing trade losses.
- Finalize and implement the National Agroecology Strategy, guiding Uganda's transition to sustainable, low-risk agricultural systems.

2. Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED)

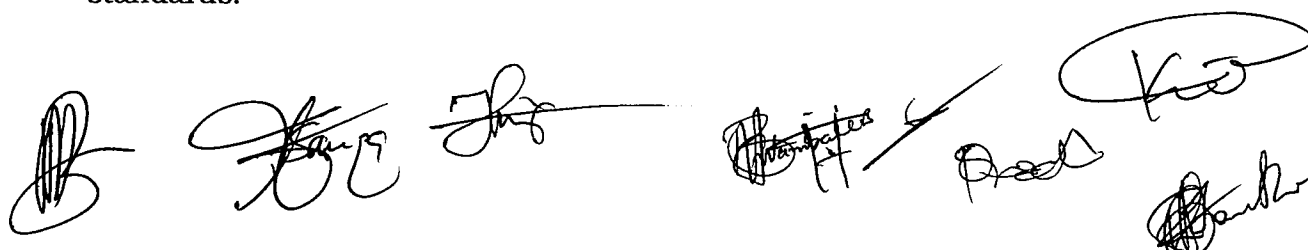
- Increase budget allocations for agrochemical regulation, enforcement, monitoring, and research into safer alternatives.
- Amend schedule 4 (1) (e) of the VAT Act to exclude hazardous agrochemicals which are classified as hazardous by the United States Environmental Protection Agency from this provision.

3. Parliament of Uganda

- Provide enhanced oversight and approve increased funding for agrochemical regulation, enforcement mechanisms, and farmer support systems.
- Fast-track review and strengthen legislation related to pesticide control and food safety.

4. Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC)

- Align pesticide regulations with the National Trade Policy and trade strategies and policies to ensure compliance with regional and international market standards.



- Support exporters to meet sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements and reduce rejection of Ugandan produce.

5. National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), Academic and other Research Institutions

- Invest in the research, development, and dissemination of organic pesticides, biological control solutions, and agroecological innovations.
- Support evidence-based alternatives to hazardous synthetic pesticides, including biological control agents, biopesticides, and improved agronomic practices.

6. Ministry of Health (MoH) & National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)

- Implement a One Health approach integrating human, animal, and environmental health in pesticide monitoring and policy.
- Strengthen surveillance systems for pesticide exposure, residues, and related health outcomes.

7. Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)

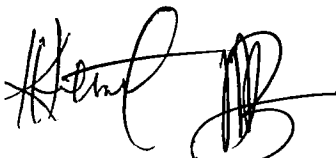
- Coordinate cross-sectoral implementation of agrochemical management policies in line with national development priorities.

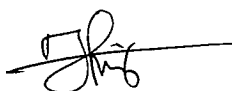
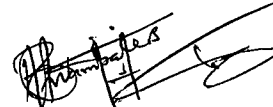
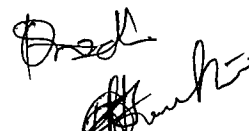
8. Non-state actors including Civil society organizations, farmers, private sector actors, religious leaders, cultural institutions, and the media should;

- Support public awareness campaigns, community monitoring, and responsible agrochemical use.
- Farmers, distributors, and importers are advised to continue using only registered products in accordance with label instructions pending formal guidance from MAAIF.

Conclusion

We commend the Government of Uganda for its leadership in addressing pesticide-related risks. We reaffirm our commitment as civil society to support policies that safeguard health, environment, and trade, while promoting risk-based, consultative, and legally sound approaches to agrochemical management. We look forward to



continued collaboration to ensure Uganda's agriculture is safe, sustainable, and competitive, benefiting farmers, consumers, and the national economy.

Signed by:

- Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI)
- Food Rights Alliance (FRA)
- Food Safety Coalition Uganda (FoSCU)
- Global Consumer Centre (CONSENT)
- Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) – Uganda.
- Center For Food and Adequate Living Rights (CEFROHT)
- Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Association
- Gender Environment and Development Action (GEDA-Uganda)
- Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF) Uganda

