



AGRICULTURE REFORM HUB UGANDA (AGROREF)

STATEMENT ON WORLD AIDS DAY

Date: 1st December 2024

As we commemorate World AIDS Day under the international theme, **Take the Rights Path: My Health, My Right**, Agriculture Reform Hub Uganda (AGROREF) stands in solidarity with all those affected by HIV/AIDS, and we reflect on the profound impact of this epidemic on vulnerable communities, particularly small-holder farmers in Uganda. Small-scale agriculture is the backbone of Uganda's economy, with over 80% of the population engaged in farming. However, small-holder farmers are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, facing unique challenges that exacerbate their vulnerability to the disease.

According to recent statistics, Uganda has an HIV prevalence rate of 6.2% among adults aged 15-49. However, the rural farming communities bear a heavier burden. In some rural districts, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is as high as 10-12%, which is significantly higher than the national average. These statistics are alarming, especially considering that small-holder farmers often face barriers such as limited access to healthcare, lack of education on prevention, and economic instability that prevents them from adopting HIV prevention measures.

The impact of HIV/AIDS in these farming communities is devastating. Farmers affected by the virus struggle with weakened health, reduced productivity, and the loss of labor, which has a direct impact on food security and economic stability. Additionally, the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS remains prevalent in many rural areas, leading to discrimination and the isolation of affected individuals, making it even harder to combat the spread of the virus.

As AGROREF, we are committed to addressing these challenges by advocating for policies that integrate HIV prevention, care, and support into agricultural development programs. We emphasize the importance of education, access to affordable healthcare, and economic empowerment for farmers to reduce their risk of HIV infection and improve their livelihoods. We also call for greater awareness of the intersection between HIV and agriculture, recognizing that the health of farmers is directly tied to the health of the agricultural sector.

On this World AIDS Day, let us renew our commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind in the fight against HIV/AIDS. We call on government bodies, NGOs, and all stakeholders to join hands in providing comprehensive support to small-holder farmers, equipping them with the resources and knowledge they need to protect themselves and their communities. Together, we can build a future where farmers thrive in health and productivity, free from the scourge of HIV/AIDS.