



**MAAIF**

Ministry of Agriculture  
Animal Industry and Fisheries

**DECLARATION OF VANILLA HARVEST DATE FOR THE  
FIRST SEASON OF THE YEAR-2022**

**STATEMENT BY**

**MAJ (RTD) KYAKULAGA FRED BWINO (MP)**

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE**

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND  
FISHERIES**

**AT**

**THE UGANDA MEDIA CENTRE,**

**24<sup>th</sup> MAY 2022**

---

## **Our Partners in Development from**

- The Catholic Relief Services (CRS),
- The Association of Vanilla Exporters of Uganda (VANEX),

**Our Key Stakeholders in the Vanilla value chain; Vanilla Farmers, Processors and Buyers,**

**The Technical Staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries,**

**Our Partners in the Media,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**Good Morning**

### **1.0 Background**

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) has a mandate to provide an enabling policy environment that facilitates competitiveness of stakeholders in the agriculture sector and has a mission to transform the sector from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture.

Vanilla, one of the Strategic high value commodities that the Government of Uganda is promoting under the National Development Plan III, is grown in over 28 districts of Uganda and predominantly in Central, Eastern and Western Uganda. The 2019 statistics ranked Uganda in the seventh position supplying 2.8% of global vanilla, which is a downward trend from the previous 4% market share. However, with more efforts now put on the sub sector, the Ministry with its commitment to promote best practices in vanilla production and

strengthen the value chain, we are more than sure that we shall change the growth trajectory of the industry.

Vanilla is used as a spice for food, beverages, cosmetics and for pharmaceutical purposes. Most of us have consumed vanilla in one way or the other, especially in flavored drinks, dairy products, sweet foods and cosmetic products.

Uganda is proud to be one of the producers of Vanilla which has proven to be a sustainable and profitable crop for her farmers. Despite its fluctuating prices on the international market, Vanilla is still selling at a much higher price than any other commercial crop grown in Uganda. With last season prices ranging from 40,000 to 50,000 Uganda shillings per Kilogram, a farmer can earn over 21M per acre per year. This shows that vanilla enterprise is still the most valuable crop for Uganda's smallholder farmers.

## **2.0 Global Vanilla outlook**

Vanilla is only grown in a few countries, such as Madagascar, Uganda, Mexico, Indonesia and China. Globally, Madagascar boasts as the leader in vanilla exports with 1,600 tons per year followed by Indonesia and France.

The current global vanilla market is caught in a paradox. It is expected to be oversupplied through 2022 and into 2023 despite a forecasted decrease in production in Madagascar but is simultaneously experiencing upward price movement in Madagascar and a few other origin countries. This is being driven by both uncertainties around the impact on the upcoming harvest in the wake of recent cyclones and the worry, according to market observers, that the Malagasy government may continue (and possibly increase) its mandated minimum price. It seems likely that the government will maintain its price support through the 2022 harvest, particularly as the country enters the presidential election cycle.

As a result, competing origins will benefit in the near term from the price umbrella Madagascar has provided them. During this period, other origins, including Uganda, will continue to take market share, increase profits and plant new material. It is expected that the market will eventually feel the impact of the world's increased production capacity that has been enabled by Malagasy government policy. The challenge for the Ugandan industry is to see how effectively and quickly it can address its systemic challenges and position itself to weather a potential downturn.

### **3.0 Status of the Vanilla Sub-Sector in Uganda today:**

Uganda's vanilla export destinations include the USA, Canada and EU countries. These markets are extremely quality sensitive and have explicit market specifications. Striving to meet the market specifications demands efforts from all stakeholders in the vanilla industry. Many challenges exist in the sector that need to be addressed in order to enable the Ugandan smallholder farmer benefit from the high value that is offered by the international market. These challenges are caused by many factors.

For instance, Vanilla Quality is ***compromised by Immature Vanilla Harvesting, Poor handling, Processing and Storage***. Low Vanilla quality is resented by International Vanilla Buyers. This affects all the stakeholders along the entire value chain: The Farmers, Processors, Exporters and Uganda as a Country. Poor quality vanilla is largely orchestrated by theft and undercover processing activities such as roasting, "buying underground" and informal trade. All these result in our vanilla becoming less competitive on the world market and less profitable on the national level.

As a nation, we have an opportunity to harness a growing long-term profitable vanilla industry. Vanilla has proved to be a sustainable and profitable crop for farmers in Uganda with potential to deliver the participating farmers and actors into the middle-income status, a target of the Government of Uganda in its Vision 2040.

#### **4.0 Collaborative Efforts**

Government in collaboration with other partners like Catholic Relief Services, Private sector organizations like VANEX, vanilla farmers and processors are promoting the development of vanilla value chain, to address the vanilla challenges in the country. Local Governments where vanilla is grown have also risen up to tackle the bad vices. We have adopted best practices from other vanilla producing countries that experience similar challenges and our vanilla has started being profiled as one of the best in the world.

The report from recent samples of Uganda vanilla that were tested in the USA, was fielded as: *“Uganda today produces some of the finest Vanilla on the World Market. These beans are quite simply the finest gourmet Bourbon-style beans we are now seeing in the market - surpassing even the finest Madagascar Bourbon beans we carry. In fact, an independent testing laboratory has reported significantly higher vanillin content in Uganda vanilla beans than any reading we have seen to date on Madagascar beans.*

The report continues *“The global vanilla industry outlook clearly shows that Uganda grown vanilla is poised to become a significant player on the World Market. Vanilla has demonstrated potential to*

*improve the livelihoods of farmers in Uganda, become a world leader in vanilla quality and business reliability and become a major global origin that would relieve some of the supply pressure on the Madagascar market (which currently supplies 80% of the world's vanilla).*

We need to scale out such achievements until Uganda emerges as number one source for the best vanilla in the world.

### **5.0 Background to Vanilla Harvest Dates**

For the past four years, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries has declared vanilla harvest dates in a bid to improve the quality of the crop and promote Uganda's global position as the leading source of high-quality vanilla. ***The harvest date is a date when the vanilla farmers should start harvesting their crop.***

Declaration of Harvest dates by Government has paid off for the Government and Vanilla farmers in general. So far, the quality and the overall image of Uganda's vanilla industry has improved. This is evidenced by positive testimonies from the Global Vanilla Buying Community, organized under the Sustainable Vanilla Initiative.

Declaring and respecting vanilla harvest dates is crucial for the country to be able to achieve the vanillin content preferred by buyers on the international market, it must be harvested only when it is mature.

### **6.0 Impact of Harvest Date on Uganda's Market**

As it was forecasted that 2022 and 2023 global market is expected to be oversupplied, it is also expected that international buyers will place more stringent quality requirements on suppliers. Therefore, premature selling and buying of vanilla must be contained to avoid the possibility of international buyers turning their backs on Uganda's vanilla.

I would like to emphasize again that the **theft and early selling of immature vanilla is harmful to the reputation of Uganda's vanilla on the global market** since it leads to exporting vanilla of lower vanillin content and may lead to total collapse of Uganda's Vanilla market.

As we may all be aware that Vanilla matures at different times in different parts of the country, therefore, I would wish to further guide that; *farmers know when they pollinated and therefore, they should also know when the nine (9) months required for vanilla maturity will come to ensure they harvest fully mature and ripe vanilla beans.* Simultaneously, traders and processors must ensure professional handling and processing of vanilla to attain the highest possible vanillin content.

If we can work together to address the practices that reduce the quality of vanilla, we will be in a stronger position to protect our farmers from the price fluctuations on the worldwide vanilla market and Uganda will become a number one supplier of the high-quality vanilla in the world.

### **7.0 Declaration of Vanilla Harvest Dates for First Season 2022**

I hereby declare that the appropriate vanilla harvest date for the **first season of the year 2022 shall be the 07<sup>th</sup> of July 2022 onwards.**

Farmers should remember to only pick ripe vanilla beans. The Government of Uganda will take strong punitive action against anyone found harvesting, or in possession of vanilla beans before the stipulated date.

I further direct the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries staff and the Local Governments Staff to be vigilant on this issue. I specifically call upon the Agricultural Police, in collaboration with the Private Sector to popularize these harvest dates, and to hunt down and expose all culprits who do not respect them.

Finally, I warn the crop inspectors at the exit points that allow immature vanilla beans to be exported contrary to their mandate to stop it forthwith. Failure to heed will lead to serious punitive measures against them

I Thank you.

**FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY**

**MAJ. (RTD) KYAKULAGA FRED BWINO (MP)**