



Climate change, food and nutrition policies in Uganda: Are they gender- and nutrition-sensitive?

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Key messages

- ▶ Over 70 percent of Uganda's population depends on rain-fed agriculture for food security, nutrition and income, making it highly vulnerable to climate change impacts.
- ▶ Global statistics from 2016 to 2018 reveal rising levels of hunger and undernourishment among Uganda's population and increasing obesity among adults above 18 years of age.
- ▶ Gender and nutrition perspectives are not consistently mainstreamed across critical sections of climate change, food and nutrition policy documents under Uganda's multi-sectoral approach.
- ▶ Gaps exist in the hierarchy of guiding documents relating to climate change, food and nutrition. Relevant sectors should systematically develop policies, implementation strategies, guidelines, action plans and budgets to ensure effective implementation of interventions in these areas by actors at different levels of government.
- ▶ There is a need to mainstream gender and nutrition across all sections of



Isaac Bwire and Esires Nabwire in a bean field in Uganda.

climate change, food and nutrition policy documents (including the situation analysis; setting of goals objectives, strategies, targets and plans; implementation arrangements; and monitoring and evaluation sections) while ensuring alignment with the national vision, goals, objectives and targets.

- ▶ Under the multi-sectoral approach, regular joint sector performance reviews of climate change, food and nutrition actions should be undertaken to reduce duplication of efforts, strengthen cross-sectoral synergies and alignment to the national vision, goals and targets.



Discussing gender and household decision-making in climate-smart agriculture in Nwoya District, Uganda.

Introduction

According to the 2018 Global Hunger Index (GHI), hunger among Uganda's population has risen, evidenced by a score of 31.2 compared to a score of 26.4 in 2016. Despite being acclaimed as the "regional food basket" for East Africa, Uganda's GHI score is higher than its immediate neighbors' (Kenya, 23.3; Tanzania, 29.5; and Rwanda, 28.7) and the sub-Saharan Africa regional average of 29.4 (GHI 2018). Whereas improvements have been registered in child nutrition and mortality indicators over the years from 2012 to 2017 (prevalence of stunting reduced from 34 to 29 percent; wasting from 5 to 4 percent; and under-five mortality from 8 to 5 percent), the proportion of the population that is undernourished grew from 31 percent during the period 2009–2010 to 41 percent during the period 2015–2017 (GHI 2018). Obesity among adults aged 18 years and above also rose from 5.8 percent in 2012 to 7.1 percent in 2016.

Most of Uganda's population (76 percent) is rural and largely dependent on rain-fed smallholder subsistence farming as a source of livelihood (UBOS 2017). In recent years, however, agricultural production has faced challenges arising from declining soil fertility, variability in rainfall patterns

and volumes, extremes such as prolonged dry spells and floods, and increased incidences of pests and diseases. Women from poor rural households are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change owing to their care responsibility of providing food, fuel and safe water for their families, which become scarce following weather extremes (FAO-CGA 2018).

In its Comprehensive National Development Planning Framework (CNDPF), the Government of Uganda acknowledges the impact of climate change on the environment and economy, particularly in terms of reduced agricultural production, productivity and incomes. Agriculture is highlighted as a key sector that should be supported to trigger agro-based industrial growth, food, income and nutrition security (Vision 2040). The CNDPF also emphasizes equity, gender equality, participation and ownership as underlying principles that should govern all development plans and planning processes. The significant roles played by women in agricultural production, household welfare, food and nutrition security are noted, with an emphasis on efforts to empower women to participate as equal partners in development (Vision 2040).

The climate change policy framework

Climate change is regarded as a cross-cutting issue that must be mainstreamed in all sectors through the planning process (Republic of Uganda 2015). The National Climate Change Policy (along with its Costed Implementation Strategy) was approved in 2015 as the guiding framework to ensure coordinated multi-sectoral action on climate change, with an emphasis on developing capacities and financial mechanisms and tools to respond to climate change. In October 2018, Uganda was the first country in Africa to sign the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Partnership Plan as part of its efforts to meet its obligations to the Paris Agreement of reducing national greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change (UNDP 2018). Uganda's NDC prioritizes adaptation, with specific focus on (i) reducing vulnerability in agriculture and livestock, forestry, infrastructure, water, energy, health and disaster risk management; and (ii) scaling up sustainable land management and climate-smart agriculture (CSA) efforts to increase resilience at grassroots level (NDC 2018).

Uganda's Vision 2040 acknowledges the adverse impacts of climate change on various sectors of the economy, which could affect the realization of socio-economic transformation. Vision 2040 provides for the development of appropriate climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies in all sectors, underlining the development of policies and organizational structures; strengthening of climate change coordination systems at national and local levels; and capacity building of local governance and decision makers on climate change. The Second National Development Plan (NDP II) provides the direction for key sectors in alignment with Vision 2040, while the Uganda Green Growth Strategy 2017/18–2030/31 ensures that the goals of Vision 2040 and the NDP II are attained sustainably.

The Climate Change Department of the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) is charged with leadership of all national climate-change related efforts. The institutional infrastructure for climate

change action is made up of multi-stakeholder committees (government departments, private sector associations, civil society, academia, district authorities) and climate change focal persons at national and sub-national level (Republic of Uganda 2015d).

The food and nutrition policy framework

The National Vision 2040 underscores nutrition as an important element of ensuring human capital development and inclusive growth. Article XXII of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 stipulates that the State shall "(i) take appropriate steps to encourage people to grow and store adequate food; (ii) establish national food reserves; and (iii) encourage and promote proper nutrition through mass education and other appropriate means in order to build a healthy state." The first Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy (UFNP) was formulated in 2003 within the context of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan. In 2005, a collaboration between the Ministries of Agriculture, Education, and Gender, Labor and Social Development resulted in the development of the National Agricultural Education Policy, Strategy and Investment Plan 2004–2015, which targeted primary pupils, youths, adults of 15 years of age and above, women, and vulnerable groups with agricultural education on the production of nutritious foods (Turcan and Bene 2017). Subsequently, the Food and Nutrition Strategy was developed in 2005 and the Food and Nutrition Bill was passed in 2009, providing legal basis for the implementation of the UFNP.

Uganda's food and nutrition policy framework has undergone a series of reforms, evolving from a sector-specific concern under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries to a multi-sectoral response coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) since 2011 (Turcan and Bene 2017). The key sectors with responsibilities under the multi-sectoral framework are agriculture, health, education, gender, labor and social development.

Other relevant sectors include trade and cooperatives, local government, public service and finance, planning and development. The Uganda Nutrition Action Plan (UNAP) 2011–2016 was developed and adopted as the multi-sectoral strategic framework for addressing nutrition. Still under review are the UNAP 2018–2025 to replace UNAP I and the National Nutrition Policy, which was drafted in 2016 to succeed the UFNP 2003. The focal targets of nutrition-related interventions in Uganda are women of reproductive age (15–49 years) and young children (UNAP I).

Assessing gender- and nutrition-sensitivity in policy documents





The assessment of gender- and nutrition-

sensitivity of selected climate change, food and nutrition policy documents utilized a framework consisting of ten criteria adapted from FAO's key recommendations for improving nutrition through agriculture and food systems (FAO 2015), and the UN Network for Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) criteria and characteristics of "good" national nutrition plans (SUN Network 2016). The adapted framework systematically incorporates aspects of gender- and nutrition-sensitivity within the same analysis. A qualitative approach was adopted for the analysis, involving a thorough examination of the content of the documents. For each document (policy/strategy/guideline), gender- and nutrition-sensitivity were assessed in ten sections as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Assessment criteria for gender- and nutrition-sensitivity of policy documents

Section in document	Criterion description
1. Situation analysis	Provides an analysis of nutrition outcome trends and determinants, causes of malnutrition and their impacts at national and subnational levels, disaggregated by sex and other characteristics: age, location, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.
2. Multi-sector and stakeholder involvement	Explains which stakeholders are involved in the development process; how the consultation process ensured effective participation of stakeholders at local and national level, including vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and smallholders.
3. Goals, objectives, strategies and targets	Sets out explicit nutrition and/or gender goals, objectives, strategies and target populations that are consistent with human rights standards and international recommendations and contribute to improving equity in achieving nutrition impacts.
4. Planned priority actions	Describes policy and programmatic actions aimed at achieving nutrition impacts for all forms of malnutrition that are feasible, sustainable and locally appropriate, based on evidence of good practice, and in line with human rights priorities. These may include measures that increase incentives and decrease disincentives for availability, access and consumption of diverse, nutritious and safe foods through environmentally sustainable production, trade and distribution; and protection and empowerment of poor women and youth.
5. Analysis of risks and proposed mitigation strategies	Describes risks that may negatively affect implementation (e.g. socioeconomic and programmatic risks) and mitigation approaches to address emergencies (such as climate-driven disasters) considering a gender perspective.
6. Governance, accountability, management and coordination mechanisms	Describes multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder governance arrangements at national and subnational levels that specify management, oversight, coordination, consultation and reporting mechanisms, including integration of national policies and provisions for gender, climate change, food security and nutrition.
7. Financial framework	Sets out a financial framework that includes a comprehensive budget or costing of planned nutrition action for national and/or subnational levels, with explicit allocations for actions targeting women, youth and other vulnerable groups.
8. Operational framework	Describes implementation arrangements for nutrition actions, with clear timelines and detailed roles and responsibilities for government and partners. Also describes how capacity in human resources and institutions will be developed and respective targets.
9. Monitoring and evaluation framework	Includes a monitoring and evaluation framework with core indicators (nutrition-sensitive, nutrition-specific and gender-sensitive), sources of information, and methods and responsibilities for ethical data collection, management, analysis, quality assurance, learning and documentation.
10. Joint periodic performance review mechanism	Describes the mechanisms for joint periodic performance reviews on nutrition to present programmatic and financial progress and for discussion on the findings and decision-making actions.

Judgements for gender- and nutrition-sensitivity were made based on one of four color codes as explained below:

Shading	Color	Description
	Red	Criterion in policy document is neither gender-sensitive nor nutrition-sensitive
	Orange	Criterion in policy document is nutrition-sensitive but not gender-sensitive
	Blue	Criterion in policy document is gender-sensitive but not nutrition-sensitive
	Green	Criterion in policy document is both gender- and nutrition-sensitive

While a detailed analysis of multi-sectoral policies is done in Bamanyaki (2018), this brief concentrates on selected policy documents (policies, strategies, guidelines and plans) from the vital sectors of Water and Environment, Agriculture, Health and Education respectively. The methodology for selecting the respective documents started with an identification of the provisions for climate change, food security and nutrition in the CNDPF, followed by the tracing of related policies, strategies, implementation guidelines, action plans and programs in the four aforementioned sectors.

Climate change policy documents	Food and nutrition policy documents
1. National Water Policy, 1999	1. National Agriculture Policy, 2013
2. Uganda National Climate Change Policy, 2015	2. National Agriculture Extension Policy, 2016
3. National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management, 2010	3. Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy, 2003
4. Uganda Green Growth Development Strategy 2017/18–2030/31	4. National Food and Nutrition Strategy 2005–2015
5. Uganda National Climate Change Learning Strategy, 2013	5. National Agriculture Extension Strategy 2005–2015
6. National Climate Change Communication Strategy 2017–2021	6. National Integrated Early Childhood Policy, 2016
7. National Adaptation Programmes of Action, 2007 (NAPA)	7. National Health Policy, 2010
8. National Adaptation Plan for the Agriculture Sector, 2018 (NAP Ag)	8. Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan 2015/16–2019/20
9. Uganda Climate Smart Agriculture Program 2015–2025	9. Uganda Nutrition Action Plan 2011–2016
10. Guidelines for the Integration of Climate Change in Sector Plans and Budgets, 2014	10. Nutrition Advocacy and Communication Strategy for Uganda Nutrition Plan 2015–2019
	11. Operational Framework for Nutrition in the National Child Survival Strategy
	12. National Nutrition Planning Guidelines for Uganda, 2015
	13. Guidelines on Maternal Nutrition in Uganda, 2010
	14. Guidelines for Integrating Nutrition in Agriculture Enterprise Mixes, 2016
	15. Policy Guidelines on Infant and Young Child Feeding, 2009
	16. Guidelines on School Feeding and Nutrition Intervention Programme, 2016–2021

Gender- and nutrition-sensitivity of climate change policies

Ten key national-level guiding documents on climate change were analyzed, which included three policies, three strategies, two plans, one program and one guideline for sectors. At least half of the policy documents were rated gender- and nutrition-sensitive in areas including multi-sector and multi-stakeholder involvement in the policy development process; planned priority actions for achieving nutrition impacts; governance, accountability, management and coordination mechanisms; and implementation arrangements for nutrition actions (see Figure 1). More than half of the climate change policy documents were at least nutrition-sensitive for seven out of the ten criteria, which could be explained by the Government of Uganda's appreciation of the adverse impacts of climate change on agricultural incomes, food and nutrition security.

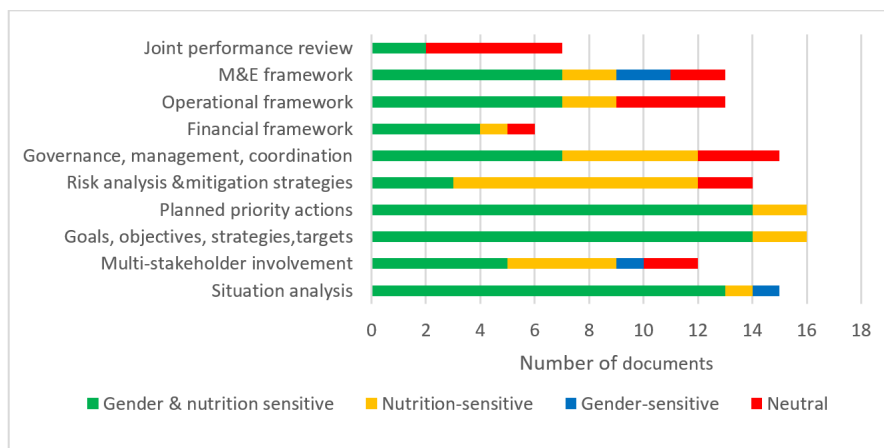


Figure 1: Analysis of gender- and nutrition-sensitivity of climate change-related policies

While specific allocations for nutrition-focused activities were seen in the financial framework of one document (the National Climate Change Communication Strategy 2017–2021), six out of the ten policy documents did not include budgets or costed plans, and two documents (the NAPA, 2007 and National Climate Change Learning Strategy, 2013) were neutral, i.e. did not explicitly allocate resources to gender- and/or nutrition-focused interventions and activities. Only two out of the ten policy documents provided for joint performance reviews that included multiple stakeholders and sectors engaged in nutrition and gender work.

Gender- and nutrition-sensitivity of food and nutrition policies

Sixteen food and nutrition policy documents were appraised for gender- and nutrition-sensitivity, which included four policies, four strategies, one plan and five sector guideline documents. Thirteen of the 16 policy documents

assessed were rated as gender- and nutrition-sensitive in sections including the situation analysis of the nutrition context; goals, objectives, strategies and/or targets; and planned priority actions for achieving nutrition impacts (see Figure 2). Ten of the 16 policy documents did not include financial frameworks, while nine documents did not include mechanisms for conducting joint performance reviews on nutrition across sectors. Only four of the 16 documents (National Agriculture Extension Policy, 2016; Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan 2015/16–2019/20; UNAP 2011–2016; National Nutrition Planning Guidelines, 2015) had explicit allocations to nutrition-related actions that were also gender-sensitive. Among the seven documents that provided for joint performance reviews, five were gender- and nutrition-neutral, implying that no explicit mention was made of the multi-sector actors that were to be involved in joint discussions on programmatic and financial progress of nutrition-related interventions.

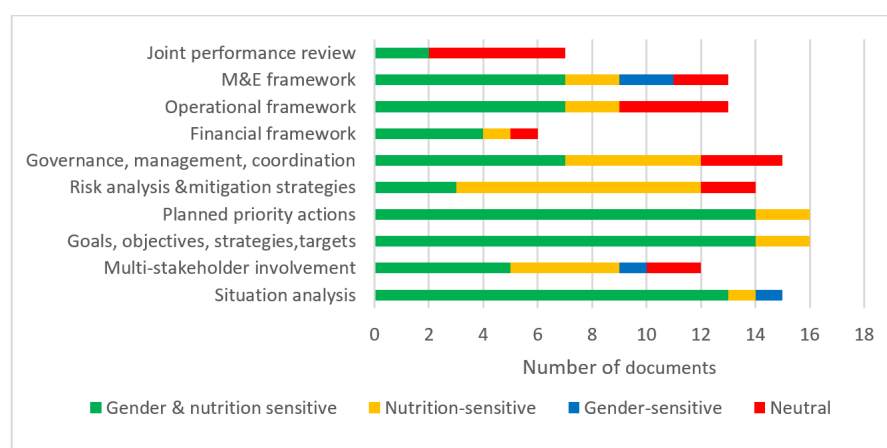


Figure 2: Analysis of gender- and nutrition-sensitivity of food and nutrition policies

Policy Implications

Drawing from the findings, there is evidence of effort by government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) to mainstream gender and nutrition across sector policy documents. However, the uneven distribution of gender- and nutrition-sensitivity across the ten criteria for both climate change and food and nutrition policy-related documents signals an unsystematic integration of a gender and nutrition perspective across sections of the respective documents.

The absence of financial frameworks in more than half of the reviewed policy documents makes it difficult to track the explicit sector allocations to gender- and nutrition-focused actions. Given that gender, climate change and nutrition are regarded as cross-cutting issues, the lack of explicit allocations to such actions may result in policy evaporation in vital sectors, whereby planned priority actions do not get implemented by key sectors, in turn leading to policy ineffectiveness and failure to achieve the national targets, goals and vision.

Considering that actors from multiple sectors are involved in climate change, food and nutrition interventions, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and joint performance reviews are crucial to evaluating progress towards the achievement of climate change and nutrition outcomes. The limited provisions for joint sector and actor performance reviews in policy documents limit the opportunities for multi-disciplinary learning and the creation and/or strengthening of synergies for added impact.

Recommendations

This brief has drawn attention to some gaps in the mainstreaming of gender and nutrition in climate change, food and nutrition-related policy documents, which may affect the effective implementation of nutrition-focused actions and realization of improved nutrition outcomes. The following recommendations are therefore proposed:

- 1) Relevant sectors should align their provisions for gender and nutrition integration in policy documents with the national objectives, goals and targets in the CNDPF. This would ensure a concerted effort towards achievement of the national objectives, goals and targets. Additionally, within relevant sectors, there should be systematic development of climate change, food and nutrition-related documents to provide effective guidance to actors at the different levels of government. These should include sector policies, implementation strategies and guidelines, action plans, and budgets that align with the aspirations, goals and targets set in the national vision and national development plans. Related to this is the need to fast-track the completion of draft guiding documents, notably the UNAP 2018–2025 and the National Nutrition Policy, which should adequately address gender and nutrition-sensitivity.
- 2) Sector MDAs should systematically mainstream gender and nutrition throughout sections of the national guiding documents by stating explicit commitments that address gender and nutrition concerns, which should be informed by gender analyses. This would enhance the clarity of policies for implementing actors at subnational levels, further informing the development of subnational plans and budgets.
- 3) The offices mandated with coordination, monitoring and evaluation of climate change and nutrition actions across sectors (i.e. the Climate Change Department of Ministry of Water and Environment and the Office of the Prime Minister) should regularly hold joint performance reviews involving relevant stakeholders to reduce duplication of efforts, strengthen cross-sectoral synergies and alignment to the national vision, goals and targets.

In summary, solving food insecurity and undernutrition through policy requires the following: (i) a thorough context-specific and gender-differentiated understanding of risks, vulnerabilities, constraints and opportunities of populations by relevant sectors; (ii) inclusion of multiple stakeholder groups (within and outside government) in the identification of priority actions and policy development processes; (iii) explicit and adequate allocation of funding by MDAs to identified actions; (iv) appropriate organization, coordination, management and monitoring of the implementation of actions by mandated offices; and (v) periodic joint performance reviews among relevant actors to learn from and address emerging challenges. It is envisaged that the application of the above recommendations will advance Uganda's efforts to improve gender, climate change, food, and nutrition outcomes.

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The CNDPF consists of the 30-year national vision (Vision 2040), five-year National Development Plans (NDP I, NDP II), Sector Policies, Master Plans, and Annual Plans. At subnational level, the planning framework consists of five-year Higher Local Government and Lower Local Government Development Plans and Annual Plans, which must align with the national agenda.

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