For Immediate Release

**Calls for urgent action on exacerbated food prices following Ukraine war**

**(Accra, Tuesday, June 7, 2022)** - ActionAid wishes to commend the government’s support on the statement issued by the AU on reported blocks on African citizens trying to cross the Ukraine border: this unacceptable treatment is shockingly racist and in breach of international law.  We also applaud the AU for choosing “***Strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the Africa continent”*** to mark the 2022 Africa Day.The theme is significant in addressing malnutrition and improving food security across the continent.

While recognising the importance of the theme, we are gravely concerned as leaders of an organisation that stands in solidarity with the poor, by the increases in food prices that has already reached record highs since the beginning of the Ukraine war. The war in Ukraine is seriously disrupting the food supply chain.  African countries are major trading partners with Russia and Ukraine for supplies of wheat, edible oil and fertilizer. Half of the grains distributed by the World Food Progamme (WFP) through its food support programmes come from Ukraine and Russia.

The rising price of food has disproportional impacts on people living in poverty, particularly women and children. It is also so critical in humanitarian crisis, such as the worsening climate-induced drought in the Horn of Africa where over 14 million people are facing severe hunger and water shortages. The Cyclone in Southern Africa Countries affected 2.7 million people. There are also millions of refugees and internally displaced people in the Horn and West Africa because of political crisis and conflicts.  In the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis, other humanitarian crisis including the humanitarian crisis in Africa are not receiving enough economic, political and public support.

In addition to the above there are now 100 million low-income urban dwellers who are hard hit by the rising food prices, many of them women headed households. People in the continent are already grappling to cope with the economic fall out of the COVID-19 pandemic and this is placing women and girls at increased risk of gender-based violence and exploitation – as always happens at times of hunger.

1. As we mark world food safety day, we call on government to address the ever-increasing food prices
* Government must take policy measures to subsidise food accessibility to low-income people in particular women and children.
* Government must increase social protection safety nets and other measures to improve the income of people in urban and rural areas to cope with the increasing food prices
* Government must invest in building national food reserves to act as buffers and reduce vulnerability to food shortages and price rises.
* Government should scale-up support to smallholder farmers, especially women smallholders and sustainable agroecological approaches to farming, so farmers can improve soil fertility for crop production, without the use of expensive fossil-fuel chemical fertilizers.
* Government in the medium term need to accelerate climate justice as a continental and international priority - ass climate change is expected to drive 122 million more people into poverty by 2030.

1. While addressing the immediate needs with urgency the above policies can only happen if African countries act collectively and united to get the necessary fiscal space to fund them. Thus, we appeal to your government to collectively resist any pressures to impose austerity policies and cuts to public spending – which all too often are recommended by the IMF in response to rising prices. In the face of the current conflict, the climate crisis and Covid, African countries need to invest more, not less, in gender responsive public services. Instead of austerity, government ought to invest in ambitious and progressive tax reforms that pass the burden on those richest individuals and companies who are most able to pay.

1. We also call on government to engage and remind the EU, USAID, and all other donors and the wider public, of the importance of adequately supporting the humanitarian crises in our continent

1. We call for a greater action by government to monitor the ill treatments of Africans in Ukraine and neighboring countries and engage with the EU in ensuring the respect and fulfillment of peoples’ human rights including from racial discrimination and abuse.

1. We also call on citizens across Ghana and their institutions to ensure consumer rights through monitoring food, fuel and related prices and through acting against selfish traders who take advantage of the disruptions in food supply chains.

**ENDS**

Signed

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Country Director

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**About ActionAid Ghana**- ActionAid Ghana (AAG) is an affiliate of ActionAid, a global justice Federation working to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. ActionAid has been working to promote elimination of violence against women through its Zero Violence project. For interviews and further information on our work, contact the Communications/PR Manager, Esther Ohenewaa Brown via Esther.Brown@actionaid.org or +233-244940336