

MAAIF officials tip diaspora youth on agriculture opportunities

Uganda possess unlimited opportunities for youth if they choose to engage in agribusiness investments.

This was the overall assessment at the end of the Ugandan Diaspora Agri-Food Investment Conference 2020 officiated by FAO Country Representative, Dr. Antonio Querido, and Hon. Victoria Ssekitoaleko, the Executive Director Uganda Agribusiness Alliance (UAA) at the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kampala.

During the conference, Mr. Yafesi Ogwang, Assistant Commissioner in charge of Agribusiness in the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), encouraged the youth in diaspora to tap into Uganda's huge export potential of agricultural products and invest locally. Ogwang was part of the panel of experts during the youth dialogue on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) for the agribusiness actors during COVID-19 crisis was on the theme.

Themed '*Ensuring a COVID-19 free workforce in the Agriculture sector*,' the conference that was partly held on Zoom offered a platform for the youth in the diaspora to share experiences about their investments, pitch initiatives, and reflect on the current state of diaspora investments in the Ugandan agri-food industry.

The conference, which was organized by MAAIF in collaboration with the UN-FAO, UAA and the diaspora department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, was also addressed by Mr. Hosea Kizimula, the Ministry's senior agribusiness officer and Ms. Consolata Acayo, Assistant Commissioner Information and Communication. At the end of the conference, three successful diaspora agripreneurs were recognized and awarded.

MAAIF to assist in dissemination of the National Child Policy and Implementation Plan.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) has nominated Ms. Consolata Acayo – Assistant Commissioner, Information and Communication and Mr. Alex Bamboona, Assistant Commissioner, Nutrition to the membership of the national steering committee of the National Child Policy (NCP) in a bid to fast-track the implementation policy. This was reached at during the orientation

workshop for the national steering committee of the NCP 2020 that was organized by Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development.

The three-day meeting that saw participants from MDAs and other Non-State-Actors was to clarify on the role of the steering committee members and also to disseminate the NCP and implementation plan. The workshop also tasked members to come up with a six-month sector contribution to the implementation of the Policy for the 2020/2021 financial year under the programme approach as stipulated in the National Development Plan III.

MAAIF to support youth innovators in farming

Farmers may not need to worry about their produce going to waste, thanks to a group of youth who have come up with the Sparky Dryer innovation. The Sparky Dryer team of youth were led by Lawrence Okettayot and demonstrated it to Staff at the Extension Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF). The dryer utilizes briquettes and solar energy to dehydrate food in five hours, thereby extending its shelf life from a few days to more than six months.

Okettayot said the machine is meant to help small-scale farmers reduce on the waste of their produce from fruits and vegetables which cannot stay long and, in most cases, go to waste if not purchased in time. The Extension Directorate officials promised to support the youths market this innovation by connecting them to various farmers' groups and innovation funders.

Dr. Opolot urges scaling of climate smart agriculture

The Commissioner, Agricultural Extension and Skills Management, Dr. Opolot Henry Nakalet, has noted that the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) is keen to support the scaling of climate smart agriculture and urged the extension actors to be smart in handling climate change issues.

He said this during a hybrid dialogue of national stakeholder on Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) at Hotel Africana, Kampala. Organised by MAAIF in collaboration with Uganda Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (UFAAS), there was both physical and online dialogue which brought on board different

Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (AEAS) actors and stakeholders from UFAAS, different ministries, departments and agencies, among others.

Dr. Opolot said many farmers have been left out in the planning process which makes it hard for scaling climate-smart agriculture technologies and their adoption across the country. He made call for farmers to always be included and made part of the system from the beginning. “Extension is also being promoted by non-professionals, this is a big risk, we need to capture data about of these and ensure we are all offering the best technologies to the farmers,” he said.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Beatrice Luzoobe, the UFAAS Chief Executive Officer, said the dialogue will create an information and knowledge forum for continuous engagement of AEAS actors and to strengthen their capacities to participate and contribute to the implementation of CSA activities.

