

MAKE MALABO WORK

A LETTER FROM SMALL-SCALE FARMERS
TO EAC AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

[#ActMalaboNow](#)

Introduction

The agricultural sector is dominant in Uganda's economy hence it continues to be the most critical sector in Uganda; it employs approximately 69% of the population and contributing half of Uganda's export earnings and a quarter of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

It is estimated that small-scale farmers produce over 89% of all the food consumed in Uganda. With the increased demand for food and agro-processed products. There is a lot of pressure put on the environment even with the current severe climate conditions. Small-scale farmers mainly depend on rainfed agriculture combined other challenges hence hindering the realising small-scale farmers enormous potential to transform the economy and make farming much more productive and profitable.

Background

This letter is in line with Vision 2040, Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP) and also the continental African Union (AU) Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation (MDAAGT) for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods signed in Malabo Equatorial Guinea in 2014.

Uganda signed the CAADP Compact in March 2010 and thereafter developed the Agriculture Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan (2010/11-2015/16) that provided the first framework to implement CAADP in Uganda with main targets to raise annual agricultural productivity to a minimum of 6%; and increase public investments in agriculture to at least 10% of their annual national budgets by 2015.

We strongly appreciate government's commitment and efforts towards developing the agriculture sector. Government has implemented different programs and projects on improving extension, provision of inputs, irrigation, training and sensitisation, youth and women empowerment, market infrastructure among others. These have contributed to the current development seen in the sector across the country.

Despite government's commitment and efforts towards developing the agriculture sector, small scale farmers with their drive to feed this country still experiences different challenges including poor post-harvest management skills, lack of markets and the exploitative marketplace, weak linkage between research and small scale farmers, poor climate change adaptation mechanisms, land fragmentation and the "**challenged**" land rights, inadequate knowledge on value addition, inability to access investment finance, pests and diseases, few and unequipped extension service providers, low participation in decision/policy making at local and national levels – small-scale farmers aren't consulted.

The Malabo Declaration of 2014 targeted seven (7) goals that are to be realised in about five years to come, in 2025. The Malabo Declaration commits AU as well as the EAC Member States to uphold 10% public spending to the agriculture sector annually and operationalise Agriculture Investment Bank; Commit EAC to end hunger and malnutrition by doubling productivity and reduction of post-harvest loss; it commits EAC to reduce poverty by half by sustaining annual agriculture growth

by at least 6% and create job opportunity to at least 30% of the youth in agriculture; It commits EAC to triple intra-Africa Trade in agricultural commodities and services and It commitment to enhancing resilience in the advent of climate variability and other shocks and lastly it commit EAC to mutual accountability to actions and results.

It is almost half a period of the Malabo implementation where we small scale farmers and citizenry of East Africa demands concrete annual plans starting from the budget of July 2019/2020 that will ensure progressive and speedily realisation of the AU Malabo Declaration 2014 and the EAC EALA Zanzibar Resolution of October 2016.

The AU Biennial Review Report of 2017 on the Malabo Declaration released in January 2018 shows that Uganda obtained an overall agriculture transformation score of 4.4 against 10 points, indicating that we are on track to achieving Malabo commitment by 2025. At the continental level, out of the 47 African countries that submitted their reports, Uganda was number 12.

Challenges to achieving Malabo as per AU Biennial Review Report of 2017

Uganda is falling short on Commitment number 2 of the Malabo that is about Enhancing Investment Finance in Agriculture. Under this commitment Uganda last financial year invested only 3.5% of her national budget in the agriculture sector which is less than the 10% committed in the Malabo Declaration. The AU recommends that Member states should increase investments in agriculture to 10%. So we call Uganda to invest progressively 10% as required by Malabo.

On commitment 3 of Ending Hunger by 2025, Uganda's undernourishment is higher (above 24%) at 25.5 % with a Malabo Declaration target of 5.5.

On the prevalence of stunting (% of children under five years old) Uganda is still having a high number of under-five children experiencing stunting at 29.0 %.

The agriculture sector had a total contribution to GDP at current prices of 24.9% in the FY 2016/17 while agriculture annual growth rate is still low below 4%.

Intra-EAC agricultural exports have shown a mixed trend in the past decade, but with a general rising path. Currently, 69% of Uganda's total exports are agro-processed with majority traded mostly in the EAC and COMESA. Although EAC member states ratified to regional integration, there is un-harmonisation of standard requirements at the borders especially on agricultural and agro-processed products which remains an impediment to cross border trade.

The implementation of the Malabo Declaration is being treated as a Kampala issue with little or no domestication at district level making it very difficult for small scale farmers to hold government accountable to actions and results.

We are calling on the East African Community (EAC) through the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) to:

Take proactive role to provide oversight over the EAC Regional Agriculture Investment Plan (EAC – RAIP) and ensure that the Malabo Biennial Review Report 2020 and Results are seriously discussed at the national level and EAC level as well as Heads of State Summit in 2020/21.

Institutionalise agriculture budgetary hearings between EALA and national stakeholders and make it an annual event culminating the EAC Agriculture Budget Summit.

Coordination with the Partner States and EAC Secretariat spearhead the establishment of the East Africa Agriculture and Food Security Commission to initiate issues of agriculture transformation and Food security in the region.

Invest more in strengthening institutions that enforce Standards for them to impose comparable standards and raise awareness of agro-exporters about the requirements of the standards.

Invest in building the technical capacity of more EAC policy negotiators at the continental and global level and promote joint planning between Ministry of EAC Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Trade of specific EAC member states for better trading policy negotiations

Ensure that the process for the development of the draft EAC Seed and Plant Varieties Bill 2018 is halted and disbanded until the issues on national, and farmers' sovereignty over seed are addressed as well as the multitude of concerns raised by smallholder farmers; There is a need for adequate inclusion and consultation of small scale farmers and civil society organisation in any development process of legislation on seed and agriculture in the EAC; and The EAC Partner states should consider and develop a fair and impartial policy approach that recognises, supports and strengthens farmer managed seed systems.

We are calling on the Government to:

Develops a multi-year action plan that is mandatory as from the budget of 2019/2020 to progressively allocate and release at least 10% of the national budget to the agriculture sector and operationalise Agriculture Investment Banks that ensures access to financial services by smallholder farmers in rural areas.

Ensure government have a just and fair disbursement system of 10% from the annual agriculture budget in support of smallholder farmers especially the youth and women at the grassroots level who make 70% of the agriculture labour force in the region. The 10% funding to be as well directed to agro-ecological agriculture that is sustainable, promotes diversity, preserves and supports local seeds varieties and community-owned seeds, preserves agrobiodiversity, soil, water and living organisms.

Ensure government allocate at least 1% of the agriculture budget to responsive, participatory research on the indigenous varieties to purpose the need for food diversification through domestic application and multiplication of more disease and drought resistant traditional varieties of crop and animals, and suitable technology. As well as the documentation of

indigenous knowledge about climate change adaptation, seed and other issues.

Address the hunger and malnutrition issues by supporting smallholder farmers to double agriculture productivity (crops, livestock and fisheries) and reduce post-harvest loss through improving storage facilities, ensured access, use and ownership of land especially among youth and women; low-cost irrigation and water harvesting schemes; access to quality extension services, improving food safety standards, access to quality and timely inputs especially local seed and organic fertilizers that do not destroy soil and environment;

Make a deliberate effort to sustain annual agriculture growth by at least 6% and invest in creating job opportunities to at least 30% of the youth in agriculture by promoting effective programs for youths and women that create an enabling environment for achieving their social and economic rights to reduce poverty.

Increase intra-regional Trade in agricultural commodities and services by supporting Uganda National Bureau of Standards to raise awareness and train agro-based SMEs about standards compliance while promoting and

operationalising the grading of Ugandan products, removing all tariffs and non-tariffs barriers to agricultural trade especially among small and medium traders and ensure access to equitable markets.

To invest in the promotion of agroecological farming which increases the resilience of farming systems to climate change and strengthens the capacity of small-scale farmers to improve their livelihood and production in the advent of climate variability and other shocks.

Invest in implementing common policy priorities like the adaptation policy responses, mitigation policy responses, prediction policy responses identified in the National Climate Change Policy to address climate change challenges by investing approximately 1.6% of the annual GDP into programs in the different sectors to tackle climate change.

Conclusion

Agriculture remains an important sector to the development of the citizens of Uganda hence the need for government to take actions that can make a rapid turnaround in agricultural productivity growth. The government should respond to the challenges affecting the growth of the sector given the fact the most of them are institutional.

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Eastern and Southern Africa
Small Scale Farmers' Forum
ESAFF - UGANDA

Physical Address: Plot No. 266 | Muvule Avenue | Buye - Ntinda
Postal Address: P.O BOX 34420 Kampala - Uganda | Telephone: +256 414 699623 | Email: coordinator@esaffuganda.org

 ESAFF Uganda  @ESAFFUG  ESAFF Uganda

www.esaffuganda.org