



**YOUNG FARMERS FEDERATION OF UGANDA
(UNYFA)**

Policy Position Paper

**Position Paper
On the Limited Access to Agricultural extension
Services under the Agricultural Sector of the
Government of Uganda.**

November 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

This is a position Paper of the Young Farmers Federation of Uganda specifically addressing the issue of Limited Access to Agricultural extension Services under the Agricultural Sector of the Government of Uganda. It brings out the concerns of the youth of Uganda in the sector and proposes alternatives for improved service delivery in Uganda.

1.1 Acknowledgements

This paper was developed with the support of Agriterria and the participation of the UNYFA members.

1.2 Problem statement

Due to their abundant energy, sizeable population, zeal to be champions, innovative minds, technology savviness and flexibility to create networks, the role of youth in driving Uganda's socio-economic transformation through agribusiness cannot be overstated. Although only 12 % of the youth want to become farmers yet agriculture is one of the leading sectors in Uganda accounting for 23% of the GDP, 30% of total exports and 65% of raw materials for local industries, (The Uganda Youth Survey Report 2017). This ugly situation is largely attributed to a wrong mindset, limited specialized skill and knowledge as a result of inadequate extension services, weak policies, limited agro supportive infrastructure, unaffordable financing, and a generally deterring macro-economic environment. Nonetheless, there are some noteworthy success stories of youth excelling in agriculture.

With 30-50% of agro inputs given out to farmers often going to waste, the Government in 2016 reprioritized the role of agricultural extension workers.

Indeed farmers have overtime been making huge losses due to mistakes in planting and management of crops and, therefore, the need for agricultural extension services.

In order to overcome these challenges of inadequate agriculture extension services, there is consensus in Uganda that youth need to be supported to effectively participate in the Agribusiness value chain to create more employment opportunities and equally contribute to Uganda's socio-economic transformation; several efforts by government, non-governmental organizations, and development partners have been geared towards realizing this. Programmes like Agriculture Cluster Development Program, National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES), Youth Venture Capital, Entandikwa, Prosperity for All, the Agricultural Credit Facility, Youth Livelihood Fund, Operation Wealth Creation, the establishment of centres of excellence and the promotion of agro-producer cooperatives, savings and credit cooperative organisations (SACCOs), community level groups and associations are all meant to place youth in a better position to take advantage of the opportunities in agribusiness.

Despite these efforts, the proportion of Uganda's food secure population has declined from 83% in July 2016 to 69% in January 2017. An estimated 10.9 million people are experiencing acute food insecurity of which 1.6 million (5%) are in a crisis situation; found in Central-1 (0.58 million); Karamoja (0.12million), Teso (0.2million), East Central (0.38million) and South Western (0.31million) regions. All regions in the country have a combined food security stressed population of 9.3 million (26%). (National Food Security Assessment Report 2017)

In addition, Ugandan youths shun the agricultural sector, one of the biggest employers in rural areas, preferring to work in service sector jobs like riding motorcycle taxis (boda-bodas), or as low-wage laborers in industries with a few lucky skilled ones competing neck and throat for the few jobs offered through the services sector like hotels, telecom, and banking. In spite of the opportunities in agribusiness youth unemployment stands at between 64% and 70%, and about 400,000 youths are released annually into the job market to compete for approximately 9,000 available jobs. About 30% of the youths who are institutionally qualified in Uganda are unable to find jobs, and the situation is even worse for semi-skilled and unskilled youths. Youths who remain unemployed, underemployed, some simply unemployable, and do not exploit their full potential, are often associated with high incidences of drug abuse and gambling. Unemployed youths migrate from rural to urban areas for work, which negatively impacts on agricultural productivity.

1.3 The Policy Framework and Mandate of MAAIF

The mandate of MAAIF is derived from the national objectives of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda XI (ii) which provides that the state shall “stimulate agricultural, industrial, technological and scientific development by adopting appropriate policies and enactment of enabling legislation” and Objective XXII (a) which provides that the state shall “take appropriate steps to encourage people to grow and store adequate food.” The mandate of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries is, ‘To promote and support sustainable and market oriented agricultural production, food security and household incomes.

Implementation of this mandate is guided by the sector vision that is 'A competitive, profitable and sustainable agricultural sector' while the sector mission is: 'To transform subsistence farming to commercial agriculture'.

The envisaged transformation will help to create employment opportunities, especially for the youth and for women, and increase household incomes, while ensuring household food security along the entire commodity value chains.

The overall goal of the sector is: 'To achieve an average growth rate of 6% per year over the next 5 years; in line with the Maputo undertakings. The development and growth of the sector is anchored on four strategic objectives or priorities, as outlined in the National Development Plan 2 (NDP2) and the Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP) 2015/16 - 2019/20:

- i. To increase production and productivity of agricultural commodities and enterprises;
- ii. To increase access to critical farm inputs;
- iii. To improve access to markets and value addition and strengthen the quality of agricultural commodities; and
- iv. To strengthen the agricultural services institutions and also create an enabling environment for the sector to grow.

1.4 Institutions in sector

The Agriculture Sector comprises of the following institutions/ votes namely:- Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) – Vote 010, the Dairy Development Authority (DDA) – Vote 121; the National Animal Genetic Resource Centre and Data Bank (NAGRC&DB) – Vote 125; the National Agriculture Research Organization (NARO) – Vote 142; the National Agriculture Advisory Services (NAADS) Secretariat

– Vote 152; the Cotton Development Organization (CDO) – Vote 155; Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) – Vote 160; Local Government Agriculture and Commercial Services – Vote 501 – 850; and, KCCA Agriculture Grant – Vote 122.

1.5 Status of the sector

Agriculture remains the main thrust of Uganda's economic growth. This is because the sector contributes 25% of our national GDP and employs over 70% of Uganda's population. This sector also provides great potential and avenues for economic growth and economic inclusion, particularly for women and youth. Statistics show that women make up 55% of the economically active population, and they also contribute more than 75% of the total farm labor and over 90% of farm-level primary processing operations. Almost half (45%) of the heads of smallholder farming households are under the age of 40.

Over the last five years, statistics show that Uganda's population has grown at a rate of 3.2% per annum while output in agriculture has been growing at an average of 2.6% per annum; compared to the required 6% annual growth by the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP).

2 SECTOR BUDGET PERFORMANCE

2.1 Sector Compliance to Sectoral Plans

The Second National Development Plan (NDP II), FY 2015/16 – 2019/20 and the Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP) are the sector’s guiding tools to implementation. The FY 2019/20 was the final year of implementation of the NDP II and the ASSP. However, based on the allocations that were reflected in both planning documents, there were inconsistencies in budget allocations to the sector against the annual costing within the NDP II and ASSP – see Table 1 below.

Table 1: Compliance to the NDP II and ASSP Costing

FY	NDP II/ASSP Costing (Bn UGX)	Budget allocation (Bn UGX)	Variance
2015/16	480	510.4	30.4
2016/17	782.5	823.4	40.9
2017/18	875.7	846.7	-29
2018/19	1,080.00	901.1	-178.9
2019/20	1,408.30	1,011	-397.3

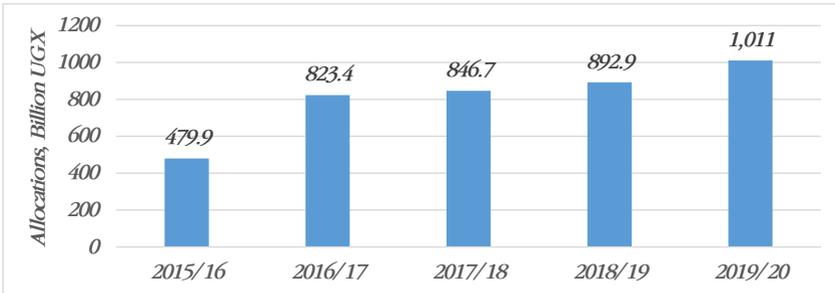
Source: CSBAG Position Paper on Agriculture Sector MPS FY 2019/20

Annual allocations from FY 2017/18 to date have been lower than the anticipated NDP II costing which has implications on our implementation in the sector based on the NDP II and ASSP.

2.2 Agricultural Sector Budget Allocation

Taking a trend analysis, we commend Government of Uganda for aligning the FY 2019/20 agriculture sector budget with the FY 2019/20 National Budget Strategy on “Industrialization for job creation and shared prosperity”. We further commend Government for increasing allocation to the sector in terms of volume from UGX 479.9 billion in FY 2015/6 to UGX 823.4 Bn in FY 2016/17, UGX 892.9Bn in FY 2018/19 and UGX 1.011 trillion for FY 2019/20 as indicated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Agriculture sector allocations, FY 2015/16 – FY 2019/20, Billion UGX



Source: Author's Compilation

In addition to the increase in allocation, we commend Government of Uganda for funding the biggest proportion of the sector compared to external support through the years in the life of the NDP II to an average of 70%. The overall increase in allocation to the sector was however still below 4% of the overall budget despite its importance to the country's growth and development.

FY 2019/20 saw an increase in allocation in the sector with an expectation to have this implicated in all sectoral votes receiving an increase. The Ministry of Agriculture received an increase in allocation from UGX 355.64Bn in FY 2018/19 to UGX 529.60Bn in FY 2019/20.

3.0 OUTSTANDING SECTOR CONCERN IDENTIFIED BY THE YOUNG FARMERS FEDERATION OF UGANDA IN LIEU OF THIS POLICY PAPER

3.1. Inadequate Agricultural extension Services:

Extension is assistance given to farmers to help them identify and analyze their production problems and become aware of the opportunities for improvement. Extension provides agricultural and vocational training on the use of fertilizer, insecticides, improved seeds, veterinary drugs, land use practices, and market information among others.

In the previous financial year 2018/19, the Ministry undertook to pilot the Nucleus farmer and Parish Zonal Farmer Model as agents of change in the farming communities. This has since become a bench mark for each extension worker to support at least one (1) model farmer per parish. The Ministry continued to support this effort in the FY 2019/20 by linking the model farmers to the technologies available at the regional research Centres. The Ministry also intends to complete the recruitment of extension workers at the Districts and Sub-counties to reach the approved number of 5,000. Currently, the Ministry has so-far recruited 3,827 extension workers.

There are inadequate Agricultural Extension services across the country mainly attributed to the low extension to farmer ratio of 1:800 yet the recommended ratio is 1:500. This has undermined the role of extension in Agriculture leading to poor/low yields and hence making Agriculture less productive. Besides the recruited extension workers have not been well facilitated to enable them perform their roles effectively.

An EPRC 2013 study, found that more prime age headed households were visited by extension workers (22.2 percent) compared to 16.4 percent of the youth headed households. Furthermore, a much smaller percentage (8.9 percent) of households composed of only youth had access to extension services compared to 19.3 percent for households with no youth.

For example, a smaller percentage (28 percent) of the youth headed households reported to have received information on market information compared to 32 percent for the non-youth headed households.

Ask(s)

- Government should recruit more agriculture extension workers and constantly give them refresher trainings on emerging technologies in agriculture. This will reduce the extension worker to farmer ratio to the recommended 1:500 from the current 1:1800.

- Government should better the working environment of agriculture extension workers by facilitating them adequately in proper housing, transportation and salaries and also availing them with the necessary tools to use in providing the extension services.

- There is need for targeted improvement in the accessibility of the youth to extension services by the concerned government and non-governmental organizations.

UNYFA demands Government of Uganda and development partners to invest in deliberate youth focused strategies to attract youth in the entire agribusiness value chain such as production, processing, transport, marketing and innovations. These must include the reconstruction, redevelopment modernizing of national agro-marketing stores,

reactivating monthly agro-produce marketing auctions and ICT innovations for access to affordable finance and competitive market.

■ The department of cooperatives of the Ministry of Trade Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC) should invest in revamping parish level cooperatives storage and regional grain silos, cold storage for perishables, and affordable produce dryers technology, so that post-harvest losses is mitigated, competitive quality of produce enhanced for international markets, and prices realized.

■ UNYFA recommends that Investments must also be channeled to soil testing, improving breeding and extension services to ensure that youth knowledge and skills improve for more productivity. Government as such should strengthen the district production departments so as to harmonize the coordination of the different actors at the district.

■ Responsible ministries departments and agencies need to urgently become more innovative, responsive, with timely and practical solutions necessary to assure youth of a bright future in agribusiness. Specifically, the relevant government institutions should deliberately budget for information dissemination in an innovative youth focused outreach strategy on all relevant policies through radio and TV programs, newspaper advertorials, social media debates and trainings to reach out to more young people in agribusiness. Such communications should deliberately transform youth mindset from viewing farming as peasant workmanship to agribusinesses.

4.0 Appeals by the youth

- For the youth to be gainfully employed in the agriculture sector, they should be targeted depending on their aspirations and resource accessibility.

There is need to promote youth groups/farmer associations for the youth to be able to access, agricultural extension and advisory services, financial services and agricultural inputs such as demand driven improved seeds, fertilizers and for ease of marketing their produce.

- Government programs like NAADS should be refocused with a strong youth component; other organizations like the Uganda National Farmers Federation can provide support in form of technical skills and knowledge, new technology and managerial skills. Emphasis should be put into understanding where employment opportunities exist along the different nodes of the agricultural value chain. Agricultural and vocational training will be critical so as to equip the youth with requisite skills and overall sensitization on agricultural technologies .

- Engage more in contract farming to ensure that youth profitably work with large processors and exporters. This will be more attractive because the youth will be joining cooperatives which will enhance bulk production, bulk storage, and opportunity for better market price negotiations.

- The youth also commit to register their businesses and remain compliant to the policies and regulations that support trade in agribusiness. Business legalities will also open new doors for international trade and this is important as they youth have realized their role in improving Uganda's balance of trade position.

. Conclusion:

The youth are not relenting any more but strongly affirm their commitment that they are ready to “Feed the World and Change Lives. The youth in agribusiness under the Young Farmers Federation of Uganda especially those within the various District Young Farmers Associations who make UNY-FA's largest membership base are calling upon government and other development partners to see them as partners in the battle to feed the world and change lives. Together the youth have the capacity to contribute to this much sought after change if the agricultural extension service system is improved.

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