

## Manufacturers asked to produce quality to benefit from the EPAs

Ugandan manufacturers have been asked to produce quality goods that meet the international standard if they are to benefit from the recent signed EU-EAC Economic Partnership agreement.

The EU-EAC Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) are trade and development agreements negotiated between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific regions engaged in a regional economic integration process. The partnership agreement was signed in October last year following a long time negotiation between the two blocs.

The Commissioner for Internal Trade in the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, Cyprian Batala said the EPA that was signed provides duty free quota free market access, thus goods to be exported must meet the standards to compete favorably with their counterparts from developed countries.



Batala

*"The EPA agreement alone shall not lead to the development of our country. We must work hard. Without hard work and producing goods that are compliant with the international standards, the Economic Partnership agreement will not yield the expected benefits,"* Cyprian Batala, said

This was during a meeting organized by SEATINI Uganda to raise awareness of the Ugandan manufacturing sector about the recently concluded Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), its key provisions and implications of the sector's development. The meeting took place at Silver Springs Hotel Bugolobi.



SEATINI Country Director, Ms. Jane Nalunga with Munu Martin, a programme officer at the meeting with the manufacturers.

For Uganda to benefit from the EPAs, Batala observed the need to put in place a regulatory framework to ensure that the goods produced are competitive on the market. He said that the ministry is currently reviewing the investment code with emphasis on promoting local content. *"Initiatives such as "Buy Uganda, Build Uganda"(BUBU) are critical for local industrial development, gainful employment, contribution to competitiveness and promoting sustainable development,"* he said

The Country Director SEATINI Uganda Ms. Jane Nalunga said that the manufacturing sector is critical for employment creation but also plays an important role in promoting backward and forward linkages.

*"Therefore the kind of policy framework in place is critical for the sector's performance and development of the country as a whole."* she noted

She noted that there is an urgent need to link what is being negotiated to the current national development challenges. Adding that, this can partly be achieved by involving the manufacturing sector players in the whole process so that they are aware of the opportunities within the agreements being negotiated and those that have already been signed.

## Exploit other revenue generation sources - Districts asked

Local Governments have been called upon to exploit different avenues of revenue generation in order to widen the tax base as well as improve service delivery to the people.

The call was made by Ms. Sarah Mukasa, the Vice Chairperson, Local Government Finance Commission while officiating at the policy and advocacy workshop organized by SEATINI Uganda and KIWEPI on May 14th, 2015 at Hotel Africana. It aimed at strengthening the ongoing work by bringing together key stakeholders at national and local level to analyse the policy and practice issues related to revenue enhancement mechanisms and the challenges.

Ms. Mukasa said that the ministry of local government looks at local revenue generation allocation and utilization as a priority towards improving delivery of basic services to the people. *"Local Governments have the potential to generate revenue. Therefore, Local revenue generation allocation and utilization are important aspects in mobilizing resources for better service delivery to people and any support towards strengthening local governments to generate revenue is a well come initiative. For that matter, SEATINI's effort is highly appreciated,"* she said

Currently, Local governments have two sources of revenue, that is, revenue transferred from the center and their own sources from the districts. In some Local governments, the two sources are complimented by the donations from the development partners. The aspect of borrowing is also not exploited by local governments.

She revealed that the transfers from Central Government to local governments are reducing because the government has other priorities such as investing in infrastructure development. *"Government's focus is currently mainly on infrastructural development. Under the new national development plan, Government has committed a lot of finances to projects that focus on infrastructures that transform the country. That's why the local government finance commission is exploring all measures that would support local governments to exploit their own source of revenues,"* she said

Ms. Mukasa partly attributed the poor performance of local government revenue generation to admin weaknesses, narrow tax base, politicization of taxes and lack of data. In order to address the gaps to local revenue generation, Ms. Mukasa revealed that LGFC



Sarah

lection, allocation and utilization.

The Deputy Chief of Party, GAPP, Mr. Tom Kyakwise observed the need to strengthen enforcement of payment of taxes by the locals. Adding that, this can partly be achieved by setting penalties for not paying taxes and having records of arrears of those who defaulted for easy revenue planning and enforcement. The meeting which was organized under a project titled; Enhancing Opportunities for Local Revenue Mobilisation and Accountability for Improved Service Delivery in Kitgum, Pader and Lamwo Districts is funded by GAPP and implemented by SEATINI Uganda in partnership with KIWEPI.

According to Ms. Nelly Busingye Mugisha, the project aims at building the capacity of stakeholders organisations, community based organisations, and media to mobilise equitably, more local revenues for sustainable and improved service delivery.



A member of parliament speaks during a meeting

The Chairperson, local government Accounts committee, Winnie Kiiza echoed the chief guest and asked local governments to identify their strengths and harness the existing opportunities.



## Civil Society Organizations caution MPs over the GMO Bill

FOLLOWING media reports that the National Resistant Movement caucus had unanimously agreed to support and pass the National Biotechnology and Biosafety Bill, 2012 in its current form, Civil Society Organization under the Umbrella of Food Rights Alliance came up to oppose the decision and advised the caucus to go slow because the bill still had a number of contentious clauses that need to be reconsidered before passing it into law.

The Bill that has been before the Parliament of Uganda since February, 2013, seeks to partly facilitate the 'safe' development and application of 'modern' biotechnology, designate a national focal point and a competent authority and provide mechanisms to regulate research, development and general release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and related matters.

While addressing a Press conference on May 7, 2015 at Hotel Africana, the Executive Director of Food Rights Alliance Ms. Agnes Kirabo noted, *"Whereas we acknowledge the need to have a law to regulate the biotechnology, it is regrettable that the Bill in its current form is far from providing the appropriate legislation that is needed to regulate GM technologies and safe guard Ugandans from the risks associated with GMOs as it is either weak or silent on pertinent issues"*.

Some of the issues which CSOs want the Bill to address before becoming a law include, Labeling of GMO products, public consultation and involvement in the legislation process, a strict clause on liability and Redress mechanisms, a comprehensive punitive penalties mechanism for both individual and corporate developers of GMO, an independent team of experts to have a fresh look at the Bill and clear definitions of terminologies.

The Country Director of SEATINI Uganda Ms. Jane Nalunga noted that the bill in its current form focuses a lot on the marketing and regulating of only one application of biotechnology, which is GMOs yet Biotechnology is broad. *"The Bill uses an all-encompassing title 'National Biotechnology and Biosafety' yet its focus is on GMOs. It should either be overhauled or redrafted to reflect biotechnology in its broadest sense*



A panel of members from Civil Society Organizations addressing Journalists at Hotel Africana

*or it is re-named GMO Bill because it's what the current Bill is all about,"* she advised.

Nalunga added that even with the current proposed amendments from the Committee on Science and Technology, it remains inadequate to protect the rights of food producers and consumers. Advising that the Bill be withdrawn from Parliament and a new one which addresses the concerns highlighted by CSOs and other stakeholders be drafted.

The Press conference was also attended by farmers and members of civil society which include, Action Aid, SEATINI, PELUM, CARITAS, AFSA, ACODE, FRA, CIPDA and Pro-biodiversity conservationist in Uganda.

### SEATINI IN THE MEDIA

<http://www.monitor.co.ug/Business/Support-local-investors-civil-society-government/-/688322/2731532/-/c1rrr7z/-/index.html>

<http://www.monitor.co.ug/Business/taxpayers-data-districts-shrinks-revenue/-/688322/2719250/-/ui4qjb/-/index.html>

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/668044-parliament-asked-to-move-cautiously-on-gmo-bill.html>

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/668564-uganda-needs-to-tackle-illicit-financial-flows.html>

## SEATINI HOLDS EXPERTS MEETING ON FREE MOVEMENT OF WORKERS

On May 19, SEATINI Uganda organized an experts consultative meeting on the liberalization of Uganda's labor sector within the framework of free movement of workers.

The experts meeting which took place at the Ministry of Gender Boardroom, intended to validate the draft schedule for movement of workers that was developed by the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development with support from SEATINI-Uganda.

The draft schedules indicate which groups of workers should be allowed to move within the region, depending on Uganda's readiness for the free movement of workers in different sectors. The meeting also intended to develop a final position for Uganda reflecting the schedule for movement of workers.



It was attended by officers from professional bodies such as ICPAU, IPPU, NOTU, COFTU, Nurses and midwives association and Makerere University Academic Staff Association.

## Photo Gallery



A panel of members from Civil Society Organisations addressing Journalists at Hotel Africana



SEATINI Uganda's staff in a Gender training at EUREKA Hotel Ntinda



Chairperson Pader District in a meeting on resource mobilization allocation and utilization at Hotel Africana



Some of the Professionals who turned up for a meeting on Free movement of workers at the Ministry of Gender labor and social Development

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