

SEATINI CALLS FOR ENHANCEMENT OF GROUP MARKETING



SEATINI Programme Officer Joseph Kakonge with Hon John Ssimbwa during the meeting

In order to improve agricultural marketing for Uganda's produce, SEATINI calls for enhancement of group marketing through the formation of new and revival of agriculture cooperatives.

Marketing as a group makes it easier for small scale farmers to get loans as well as raise large stock to be able to supply the international organizations. It also makes information and skills sharing easy.

This was at Hotel Africana during the release of findings of a study that measured citizens' perceptions of Agricultural Market Access in Northern Uganda that was carried out by SEATINI-Uganda.

According to the study, lack of access to markets coupled with poor road networks, lack of market information, and poor storage facilities still poses a challenge to most farmers hence affecting their profits.

"There is a struggle of turning agriculture into business especially in Northern Uganda, an area that is just coming out of conflict. Farmers do not have access to market information hence middle men take advantage of the situation and buy the agricultural products at the lowest prices." Says Joseph Kakonge, the Programme Officer at SEATINI Uganda.

The study also finds out that farmers are not protected when it comes to market prices and that the middle men reap better than the farmers by using poor quality weighing scales. "A farmer expects 100 kilograms but when the buyer uses his scale its less by around 10 kgs. Not because it's actually weighing less but because the weighing scale was tampered with," he added.

MP for Makindye East John Simbwa said government plans to come up with a policy to protect the sellers. "We need to come up with a legal framework so that it protects the farmers such that when it comes to selling, she sells directly to the buyer not the middle man".

Lack of market access is worsened by the absence of the district commercial officers at the community level to guide farmers on market issues. "Farmers were asking, where are they? They know where their offices are but they are never in office, never on the ground" Kakonge added

However, the District Commercial officers argue that they are interested in doing their work but are not well facilitated. However, Silver Ojakol, the Commissioner of External trade said the District Commercial officers are facilitated fully by the ministry with fuel and motorcycles to move around.

"They have motorcycles, they are facilitated with about 7m per quarter basing on the work plan they submit, offices refurbished and brand new equipment such as computers which are connected to the internet. So I don't know the kind of facilitation they want." Ojakol added

Ojakol, advised farmers to utilize the presence of the East African regional markets other than their local village markets. "We must stop thinking small that is in terms of local markets. Let us think big by utilizing the regional market." Ojakol said



The Presidential Advisor on Agriculture sharing with the Participants who turned up for the meeting at Hotel Africana

SEMUTO PASSES A BY-LAW ON MAIZE STANDARD

Leaders in Ssemuto Sub County, Nakaseke district have passed a by-law on implementing the EAC maize standards. This followed a number of consultative meetings organized by SEATINI-Uganda with farmers and traders on how to meet the maize standards so as to better access the regional markets.

This is under SEATINI's project titled, "Upgrading quality standards in agriculture for Uganda maize and sesame" funded by Trademark East Africa.

The LC III Chairman Ssemuto Sub county, Mr. Henry Nswemu said that the bylaw emphasizes the proper drying of maize once it has matured, confiscation of immature produce found with producers or traders, burning of fields that have been sprayed with harmful chemicals to dry maize faster, burning of fields where immature maize has been slashed to dry on the ground and punishment of farmers who do not have granaries.

He said the bylaw has been forwarded to Nakaseke District Council for approval and passing into a district ordinance for the whole district. This will follow similar submissions of bylaws on the same by Kapeeka, Nakaseke and Kansangombe sub counties, all in Nakaseke district.

Nakaseke district is one of the districts in the country known for maize growing. However, maize producers in the district, just as those in other parts of the country have not been able to reap fully from existing opportunities such as the EAC Common Market due to production of poor quality maize which does not meet the EAC maize standards thus limiting Uganda's competitiveness in the regional agro markets.

SEATINI Country Director Jane Nalunga notes that despite the country's high agricultural production potential, the exports are still very low. She attributes this to failure to adhere to market requirements especially standards which in the past lead to the rejection of Ugandan maize by other EAC countries. In 2013, Tanzania rejected over 1000 Metric Tonnes of maize from Uganda alleging that it was of poor quality.

The 18 months project focuses on improving quality of maize and sesame for better access to the wider EAC market through



A cross section of farmers and district leaders in one of the meetings organized by SEATINI in Nakaseke district

creating awareness on the standards, capacity building and policy advocacy through which value chain actors will be able to engage on applicability of the maize standard and on developing a standard for Sesame. The project targets all actors along the value chains as well as policy makers at local, national and regional levels in the areas of trade, health, agriculture and EAC affairs.

Ms. Nalunga stressed that the project will help the farmers to be able to utilize opportunities in accessing the EAC market and improving their incomes, hence trading their way out of poverty. The Nakaseke Deputy Resident District Commissioner Fred Nayebare pledged his support towards the passing of the bylaw on maize standard by the local councils. He however asked farmers to form cooperatives to enable them secure good prices for their produce. "If you have problems with passing the by-laws, invite me I will give you the support you need," Nayebare said. He urged them to add value to their maize if they are to fetch high prices as well as improve their standards of living.

SEATINI MEETS FARMERS ON COMPLIANCE WITH MAIZE AND BEANS STANDARDS



SEATINI Program officer Asiimwe Lina presenting during a workshop in Soroti

On November 18th, 2014 SEATINI Uganda held a meeting with farmers from Eastern Uganda on compliance with EAC maize and beans standards. The meeting took place at Akello Hotel in Soroti.

The farmers were from Amuria, Katakwi and Soroti. The meeting was facilitated by officers from the ministry for EAC affairs, ministry for trade industry and cooperatives and SEATINI.

The topics covered include developments in enhancing agriculture

food security and productivity at the regional level, developments in promoting market access and agriculture trade and the EAC standards and the need for compliance.

The District Production Officer appreciated SEATINI-Uganda for taking an active role in the process of improving quality standards of maize and sesame.

SEATINI engages University students on trade negotiations

On November 13, 2014, SEATINI Uganda called on youth to get involved in negotiations of trade, bilateral and investment agreements rather than leaving it to technocrats and politicians.

Uganda has been involved in agreements /negotiations such as Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), the US-East African Community Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement.

“Because your voices are not heard, interested parties will take advantage to negotiate trade and investment agreements that serve their interests and you are left out,” Jane Nalunga, the country director of SEATINI-Uganda said this during a students’ dialogue on the importance of democratizing trade and investment negotiation process for a people-centred development at Makerere Business School in Kampala.

The dialogue was held under the theme: “Why the youth should be concerned about bilateral trade and investment negotiations and agreements.”



Some of the students who participated in the dialogue at MUBS



Dr. Timothy Esemu, The head of Marketing and International business department at MUBS shakes hand with Mr. Nathan Irumba the Executive Director SEATINI. Looking on is Ms. Jane Nalunga, the country Director.

Ms. Lina Asimwe, a SEATINI Programme officer noted that multinationals have vested interest in negotiating trade agreements that will benefit their organizations and countries at large.

“Any company wants to maximize profits but the role of government is to make sure people benefit,” she said, underlining that some agreements are outrageous and therefore need for citizens involvement. Meanwhile, Asimwe blamed politicians for hijacking the process of negotiating trade and investments agreements instead of the experts.

Ambassador Nathan Irumba, the Executive director of SEATINI observed that international systems dominate the decision-making process of trade and investment agreements because they are the major economies. Citing the US, Japan, European Union and Canada as major economies.

The head of department for Marketing and International business at Makerere Business School, Dr. Timothy Esemu, stressed the importance of involving as many people as possible in trade agreements negotiations because “it affects our lives”.

Students, on their part, blamed African leaders for not resisting the foreign influence in trade and investment agreement negotiations.

The dialogue aimed at raising awareness on the role of state and citizens in shaping and developing pro development trade and investment negotiations positions. It also looked to igniting debate among the youth on their role in influencing trade and trade-related policy positions.

SEATINI IN MEDIA

<http://www.monitor.co.ug/Business/Govt-to-set-up-local-revenue-database-system/-/688322/2508378/-/t7d97c/-/index.htm>

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/662110-students-involvement-in-investment-negotiations-is-key.html#.VHG0xHqmDG8.gmail>



The TESCRR programme staff on a talk show on Radio One

Photo Gallery



High profile guests who turned up for the project inception meeting



Journalists interviewing Silver Ojakol, a Commissioner from the Ministry of Trade during the release of a study on market access



SEATINI Uganda board members in meeting



Representatives of cultural institutions in a meeting on Biosafety and Biotechnology Bill 2012 in Hoima



Prof. Ndebesa Mwangutsya with the Members of Parliament who turned up for the project inception meeting



SEATINI Uganda's Financing for Development/ Tax justice Programme staff on a Radio Programme in Arua

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