

SEATINI PARTNERS WITH UNBS TO PROMOTE STANDARDS



SEATINI Country Director Ms. Jane Nalunga shaking hands with the UNBS executive Director Ben Manyindo after the signing of the memorandum of understanding.

Last month, SEATINI Uganda signed a memorandum of understanding with the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) to facilitate the development of a sesame standard and the implementation of the EAC maize standard by value chain actors at the grassroots.

The partnership involves conducting sensitization and awareness creation, trainings and capacity building and research and information generation and policy advocacy.

This will be done under an 18 months project titled, 'Upgrading quality standards in agriculture for Uganda maize and sesame' which is being implemented by SEATINI Uganda with support from TradeMark East Africa.

The project aims at reducing maize and sesame metric tonnes rejected at the borders that do not meet quality, increase incomes at household levels especially for women farmers, increase awareness about standards, advocate for pricing in line with grades and cause behavioral and attitude change among value chain actors.

The SEATINI Country Director Ms. Jane Nalunga noted that despite the presence of maize standards, a number of challenges constrain the ability of value chain actors from meeting the standards. These include lack of awareness about the standards, limited capacity to implement the standards, lack of legislative frameworks at the local levels to ensure implementation, and limited coordination amongst implementing agencies amongst others.

In the case of products like sesame, there are no standards in place as yet to guide the producers and traders on quality measures which they would use to negotiate better prices.

"The issue of complying with standards is important if Uganda is trade its way out of poverty. "We have the potential but the issue of standards along the value chain is still a problem," she noted

It is therefore important for the government as well as non state actors to collaborate on enhancing implementation and compliance with set market standards so as to enable better market access for key products and in turn yield better incomes and poverty reduction.

Ms. Nalunga appreciated the confidence UNBS entrusted in SEATINI by partnering together. "We appreciate the confidence you have put in us. it is not easy for government to sign an MOU with an NGO," she said



UNBS Lawyer helping the two sign the memorandum of understanding.

INCORPORATE CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY IN THE TRADE POLICY

SEATINI Executive Director, Ambassador Nathan Irumba has asked the ministry of trade to review the National trade policy and incorporate issues of climate change, food security and trade.

“The three areas are interlinked; the effect of climate change on livelihoods is being manifested in the form of extreme weather patterns such as droughts, and heavy rainfalls. These adversely affect agriculture production, food security and trade,” he said

Meanwhile the Minister for Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC), Hon. Amelia Kyambadde, noted that Uganda’s agriculture sector is under threat of climate change as it totally depends on rainfall, thus calling for serious interventions on climate change and its adverse effects in trade and tourism.

This was during a speech read for her by the Commissioner for internal trade, Raymond Agaba at the opening of the 7th National Reference Group meeting on Climate, food, and trade at Hotel Africana.

The minister welcomed initiatives such as the Promoting Agriculture Climate and Trade Linkages (PACT) project for tackling issues of climate, trade and food security.

She assured the participants that the information generated throughout the project implementation period will help to enrich related policies and practices.

However she noted that similar projects are needed to enable the country/region gain the necessary capacity to holistically deal with issue of climate change and its impact on food security and trade.

A senior commercial officer in the ministry of trade Zakey Kalega revealed that as a result of the PACT project, the Trade Licensing Act was reviewed and charcoal was deleted from the list of licensed businesses in Uganda.

“Before, charcoal was part of the businesses licensed in Uganda but because of these interventions, charcoal was removed. You can’t have a trading license for selling charcoal,” he said

The meeting was attended by important guests such as Ambassador Rosette Nyirikindi, officials from CUTS International and government ministries.

SEATINI SIGNS A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH UNBS

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Adding that, “We realized that working together with UNBS, can enable us make a difference in the lives of people as well as create sustainable development.”

The Manager in charge of Standards at UNBS, Mr. Eboku noted that the Institution is constrained by resources to have standards in place for the different areas, thus welcoming the partnership with SEATINI which help to increase public knowledge on standards in order to ensure compliance. “We have not had a standard for SimSim. I am happy that we are collaborating with SEATINI to have one,”Eboku said

The Executive Director, Mr. Ben Manyindo noted that the only ways to get people out poverty is to help them better both their yields and the quality.

Uganda has a wider market which provides opportunities for farmers and traders to increase production and export of agriculture products and hence gain more incomes and trade their way out of poverty. It should be noted that this sector

employs over 80% of the population, majority of whom are small holder farmers facing challenges in sustaining their livelihoods.

Maize is among the crops in Uganda with high export potential within the EAC owing to its high demand by the partner states. For example in Kenya the annual demand for maize is estimated at 3, 670,000 MT with an annual deficit of 600,000 MT. Uganda’s export potential is estimated between 200,000 and 250,000 MT annually, however even while this seems low, the country formally exports only half of this amount, a situation that is attributed to high post harvest losses as well as failure to meet market requirements including the EAC set standards, which results in rejection of produce during formal cross border trade.

Sesame/sim sim is one of the ‘upcoming’ oil seed crops in Uganda that is enjoying increasing demand on the regional and global market. However despite its importance, at the moment there is no standard at either national or regional levels set to regulate the quality produced and sold. It should be noted that the absence of a standard implies that farmers cannot be rewarded with better prices for better quality.

Nakaseke District leadership pledges support for the Maize Standard project



The Chief Administration Officer for Nakaseke district addressing the delegation

LEADERS in Nakaseke district have pledged to provide full support to the implementation of the upgrading quality standards for Uganda's maize and Sesame Project, a project implemented by SEATINI Uganda in Masindi, Lira and Nakaseke. The project is funded by TradeMark East Africa.

Mr. Ezaruku Kazimiro, Chief Administrative Officer, Nakaseke District pledged support for the project and the bylaw, stressing that the district leadership is interested in working with development partners towards improving the livelihoods of the stakeholders and as such, the tabling of the bylaw would have the full support of the LCV and his Council.

This was during a lobby meeting organized by SEATINI to garner support for the project interventions from the District leadership and more specifically to foster the passing of the bylaw at district level.

The meeting was attended by the district leadership (CAO & District Chairperson), SEATINI staff, and a delegation of representatives from the Local Council leadership in each of the sub counties that submitted the resolutions as well as representatives from a committee that was elected by the farmers and traders to champion advocacy issues on implementation of the maize standard.

"So this issue of bylaw on standards has come very timely, I want to assure you that am going to give you maximum support and that of the district leadership," he said

He revealed that the district plans to have the issue of the bylaw on maize standards in its next council meeting in May. However the technical committee for production shall first review the bylaw before it is passed by the council.

"Our next council meeting shall look into that issue. We shall be passing our budget for 2015/2016 as a district, if everything goes well I would like to see this bylaw passed too," he said

The CAO noted that there are a number of development partners operating in the district on issues of health and education, however there is none at the moment working on issues of poverty eradication, and production, and therefore SEATINI's intentions are timely and much appreciated. He added that where as Nakaseke district has a lot of potential in agricultural production, the challenge constraining development in the area is the failure to market the district's potential.

Ms. Lina Asiiimwe, Program Officer, SEATINI-Uganda explained that while Uganda has a lot of opportunities in the regional market for agro trade the challenge has been on poor post-harvest handling and low standard produce which results in losses and low prices, and in turn demotivates farmers. She added that the project aims to create awareness about the market standards, as well as build capacity of farmers, traders and other actors along the value chain to meet these standards.



Mr. George Kirabira a maize farmer from Sembwa Nakaseke explains to the Chief Administration Officer the challenges farmers face due to absence of a bylaw on maize standard

The Chairman Ssemuto sub country Mr. Henry Nswemu noted that the most pressing challenge to compliance with standards in the district was the absence of a policy framework to enforce the standards, and undertook to develop bylaws on implementation of the maize standards.

SEATINI IN MEDIA

<http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Some-Budget-proposals-may-kill-growth--CSOs/-/688334/2698128/-lg7cqmf/-/index.html>

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/667492-csos-want-boda-boda-riders-to-pay-sh300-000-tax.html>

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/667258-unbs-seatini-to-promote-maize-standards.html>

Photo Gallery



Local leaders who attended a meeting on revenue mobilization in Pader district



Both UNBS and SEATINI staff after the signing of the MOU



CUTS International's Julian Mukiibi answering some questions about the PACT pro-



CSO's to FRA addressing Journalists on GMOs at Hotel Africana

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