



**Building an Effective Advocacy Movement for Sustainable and Equitable
Agricultural Development in Africa**

Modernisation of Smallholder Agriculture and Policy Making in Uganda

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Introduction

Agriculture is the backbone of Uganda's economy and an important driver of economic development and poverty reduction. Approximately 73% of Ugandans depend on agriculture (MAAIF, 2009). However, the sector currently faces many multifaceted challenges which include land degradation, inadequate market access, unreliable weather and civil strife. Agricultural growth is also affected by other associated multi-sectoral considerations such as poor infrastructure, low literacy levels, health considerations (for example, HIV-AIDS), etc. In addition, most agricultural programmes in Uganda are under-funded (Mkandawire, 2002) and are actually declining. These challenges are exacerbated by the low level of commitment of the Ugandan Government to the agricultural sector, in terms of policy and physical investment in the productive sectors of the Agricultural Knowledge and Information System (AKIS).

The African Union's (AU) CAADP initiative potentially provides an opportunity to improve the capacity of agricultural production and address a number of constraints currently impeding growth in the sector. CAADP signals a step towards a much more comprehensive approach to agricultural reforms with the potential to positively impact upon rural livelihoods. In the Uganda context, the CAADP directly integrates into the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), Peace Recovery and Development Programme (PRDP), Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme (NUREP), National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAADS), Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) and the Ministry of Agriculture Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP 2010). These strategies seek to address agriculture development as a core to poverty reduction in Uganda (MAAIF, 2009).

Despite the above programmes, agricultural production in Uganda is in decline¹. Real growth in agricultural production has declined steadily from 7.9% of GDP in 2000/01 to 0.7% of GDP in 2007/2008 (MAAIF, 2009). According to the Ugandan government, the biggest constraints to agricultural production include crop pests and livestock diseases, lack of suitable inputs, lack of appropriate technologies to increase productivity, the vagaries of weather and limited access to financial and extension services (MFPED, 2009). Increasing agricultural productivity not only

¹ Refer to table 2 for the trends in Uganda's Agricultural performance.

depends on improving existing production deficiencies through the adoption of modern or improved technologies and practices, but also depends critically on many other factors. These include the need for access to adequate productive resources, well-functioning markets, infrastructure and a conducive policy environment that is built on continuous advocacy programmes. To realise these good practices, there is a need for a well-functioning and relatively independent civil society with adequate capacities to analyse policies and engage government.

Problem and Research Context

Over the last three decades, the world has witnessed rapid changes in global policy environment ranging from protectionist planned economic systems to liberalised and externally driven market-led economic systems. Many developing countries, including Uganda, experienced sweeping economic crises in the late 1980s and 1990s, and as a result a number of them were forced to undertake economic policy reforms, largely supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (MAAIF, 2009). In agriculture, economic policy shifts included the lifting of price fixing by state organs, the dismantling of monopolistic state produce and marketing boards, downsizing of government extension staff and total elimination of government provision of agricultural subsidies and/or free provision of fertiliser, seed and other agricultural inputs.

The implementation of adjustment programmes in Uganda had multiple impacts that affected various sectors of the Ugandan economy. The agricultural sector was drastically affected due to its interdependence on other sectors such as industry, the transport and communication sector, investment, public service and trade, among others. One of the major changes associated with adjustment was the introduction of the policy of decentralisation. The implementation of the decentralisation administrative system was aimed at easing the policy making process and enhancing the bottom up approach which increases stakeholder participation. However, the process of decentralisation was not followed up by adequate resource allocation and capacity support. As a result, decentralised government agencies have limited resources and this is negatively affecting their performance.

Although the majority of Uganda's household still eke out an existence from agriculture, the sector receives a pittance in terms of budgetary allocation. Only 3.8% and 4.4% was allocated for

agriculture in the national budget for the financial year 2008/2009 and 2009 /2010 respectively (GoU Budget, 2008, MFPED, 2009). Furthermore, the sector remains besieged by multiple and multidimensional challenges which have been described in the introductory section, but will also be elaborated here from a Ugandan perspective. It is important to emphasise that the underdevelopment of agriculture will not necessarily be resolved by increasing budget allocation, rather there is a need for high level coordination of the different agencies tasked with implementing the programmes targeting the smallholder farmers who dominate the sector. This study reveals that institutional issues such as capacity weakness, insufficient end user (farmers) and private sector involvement, and an ineffective farmer support system persist in most of Uganda's agriculture productivity programmes and organisations, thus hampering progress in the sector.

The farmers, who should be stakeholders, have a limited voice to articulate and advocate for their rights. The collapse of co-operative unions in Uganda and over reliance on an already weak government programme has contributed to the emergence of unaffordable private sector led extension services. The extension services have to be hired (outsourced through contracting out programme) at sub-county levels according to the NAADS implementation programme.² Such an approach lacks institutional mechanisms for farmer protection and thus limited utilisation of the agricultural programmes.

Uganda and the CAADP

The Ugandan government signed the CAADP compact on March 31st 2010. This follows the African Heads of state meeting in Maputo in July 2003 in which African governments, including Uganda, agreed to the CAADP agenda. Within the four pillar framework, CAADP has key principles of building partnerships, dialogue, and mutual peer accountability at all levels and expatriation of regional complementarities review (Uganda CAADP Brochure 2009). If properly implemented, the CAADP process has the potential to produce a robust and empowered farmer society. The CAADP in Uganda is housed under the Uganda Ministry of Agriculture Animal industry and Fisheries (MAAIF). The government of Uganda held a number of round table discussions through which the CAADP compact was developed. These discussions

² Outsourcing of extension services in Uganda has however been affected by corruption, insufficient institutional monitoring and limited and inexperienced staff in financial management leading to the misuse of the NAADS funds.

involved government representatives, development partners, and farmers through the National Farmers Federation (Uganda CAADP Compact 2010).³The vision of the CAADP is in line with and supported by Uganda's own strategies such as the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), The Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA), the National Development Plan now under development and the DSIP. The ministry of Agriculture notes that there is an increasing recognition of the fundamental importance of agriculture to Uganda's economy and of the central role it should play in development, economic growth and poverty reduction. Government strategies like Prosperity for All (PFA) which targets the poor are in line with the CAADP's Pillar III (see introductory chapter).

However, it is important to note that the CAADP in Uganda has had limited focus, even within government departments, despite a number of round table discussions leading to the signing of the compact. Many people within the Districts Agricultural Offices who were consulted during key informant interviews expressed limited or no knowledge of the CAADP. The strategy is yet to be properly integrated into all sectors of the economy. Furthermore, as already noted the Government of Uganda (GoU) has not yet made any significant budgetary allocation towards agriculture since signing the compact.

Access to land and Smallholder Agriculture in Uganda

In Uganda and the region as a whole, land is a volatile and political issue. Land disputes have broken out across national boundaries and spread to tribal and ethnic groups. Before January 2010 when the new land act was signed, Uganda had not had a clearly defined and consolidated National Land Policy since the advent of colonialism in the 19th century. Land issues in Uganda are impacted by contemporary phenomenon such as the discovery of extensive deposits of mineral wealth⁴, generating overwhelming uncertainties in land rights and resulting in tenure insecurity (MLHUD⁵ 2009).

Following the 1995 constitution, the Ugandan government established the 1998 Land Act that provided for the District Land Tribunals to address land conflicts. This was further followed by

³ Uganda CAADP Compact to support the successful implementation of the Agricultural Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP): March, 2010.

⁴ The case of oil discovery in the Western and Northern parts of the country has intensified national concerns on land purchase.

⁵ MLHUD is the Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development

the 2004 Land Amendment Act which included a clause on spousal consent in conducting land transactions. Specifically, the 2004 Land Amendment Act requires women to endorse any transaction that involves land at household level. However, many issues relating to the customary land tenure rights and ‘mailo land’ (in central Uganda) remained unaddressed. The gaps in these earlier laws necessitated the initiation of the new Land Amendment Act 2010. The areas of focus in the new national Land Act include redressing historical injustices in land rights and providing more equitable access to land, providing livelihood security through employment or access to land for more intensive use, facilitating appropriate development, delivering land-use services and protecting fragile environments (MLHUD, 2009). The law also focuses on registering formal and customary rights to land and fixed property, generating revenue from land and property tax and providing effective land administration.⁶

Unlike the previous laws, the new land law in Uganda was developed after a highly participatory and inclusive process which took into account the varied interests of the key stakeholders. The Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment (MWLE) led the preparation of the national policy, in collaboration with other key institutions, including Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MFPE), the Uganda Land Commission (ULC), Ministry of Gender (MoG), NGOs working on land issues, the Uganda Land Alliance, the donor community and other key stakeholders particularly farmers and cultural institutions.

Following a series of land evictions based on tribal (ethnic) conflicts in the country, many people especially the smallholders expressed their hope in the new land law⁷. However, focus groups discussions have revealed that some also fear that the law may suffer from implementation challenges, given the level of corruption and the poor state of institutions that exist to ensure its success.

The land registry in Uganda was ranked among the five most corrupt government departments. The judiciary recently revealed that an increasing number of land cases remain unaddressed due

⁶ The National Land Policy, issues and recommendations report from stakeholders’ consultations. Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development: parliamentary avenue, Kampala–Uganda 14th September 2009.

⁷ New vision, 11 January. 2010; New vision 19th March 2010; BBC 27th November 2009.

to the shortage of judges (MLHUD, 2009). The new land law can potentially reduce the recurrent cases of land evictions and disputes between landlords and squatters. The central region of Uganda is characterised by Mailo Land under the guardianship of the Kabaka of Buganda. This means that every person buying land in Buganda is a squatter. This arrangement was instituted under the colonial policies in the 1900 Buganda Agreement (Rugadya M, 1999). Also, many people in the central region who are tenants on land owned by those who have land titles (land lords suffer from evictions when the landlords sell the land (Rugadya, M., 2009). The Northern region of the country is dominated by customary land tenure and thus farmers' use of land as security to acquire loans from financial institutions still remains difficult. The new land policy has not been subject to scrutiny through implementation. However, there are already a lot of contestations from different sections of Ugandan society, mostly in the central region⁸.

Land and Agriculture production

In Uganda, agricultural production is mainly carried out by smallholders who own an average 3.2 acres (MAAIF - PMA 2009)⁹. Not surprisingly, farm sizes tend to be smallest in the more densely populated highlands and largest in the sparsely populated Northern and North-Eastern parts of the country.

Table 1: Farmer categories in Uganda by land holding (acres)

Zone	Small-Holders	Medium Holders	Large-Holders	Average
2: North-Eastern Savannah Grasslands	1.9	4.5	12.0	6.1
3: North-Western Savannah Grasslands	2.0	4.0	10.0	5.4
4: Para Savannahs	1.4	3.3	8.5	4.3
5: Kyoga Plains	0.9	2.0	4.4	2.7
6: Lake Victoria Crescent	0.7	1.9	7.0	4.2
7: Western Savannah Grasslands	1.3	3.9	17.2	7.3
8: Pastoral Rangelands	0.8	2.2	9.7	4.2
9: South-Western Farmlands	0.8	1.9	6.4	3.0

⁸ The new land law has been contested a lot as not offering solutions to the land problems in Uganda. It is associated with blames of government trying to grab land from Buganda.

⁹ MAAIF - Needs Assessment Study of Farmer Categories and Developing a Differentiated Strategy for a Plan of Action. PMA Secretariat, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. Draft. April 2009.

10: Highland Ranges	0.8	2.0	4.5	2.6
National:				3.2

Source: MAAIF - PMA Secretariat, 2009

Agricultural land has not always been optimally and sustainably used. Land productivity potential, land capacity and land sustainability for agriculture is unknown. This makes it virtually impossible to allocate land to its optimal use. However the government has adopted agriculture zoning in order to address the land use practices. The new agricultural policy allows changes in land use within protected areas, especially forests, wetlands and wildlife reserves. Management of protected areas is largely in the hands of government which has created policies that have resulted in land use changes in these areas.

The core problem in the conservation and management of these ecosystems is the unsustainable exploitation arising from conflicting land use and inadequate enforcement of natural resource management regulations. At present, land use activities not only lead to environmental degradation but also loss of biodiversity, both in protected and unprotected environments. There is a lack of an integrated and comprehensive approach to the management of land-based resources. There is a need to harmonize policies, laws and regulations dealing with land-based natural resources and to develop clear criteria for setting aside areas for conservation in the country. There is no mechanism for resolving grievances of communities arising from human conflicts, environmental conservation and sustainable management of land for agriculture production.

Land use management in Uganda

Physical development planning at regional and local levels is an important tool in the management of land under any tenure. It enables the state local authorities, communities and individuals to determine in advance the direction and rate of progression of land sector activities by region and area. However, these instruments have failed to provide adequate guidelines and a framework for planning at the national or regional levels and little guidance for the development of land use plans in rural areas. The majority of smallholder farmers have been excluded from the land use planning process. Besides, planning authorities (local councils) do not always have the resources and technical capacity to plan or implement approved plans. This explains the persistent land wrangles, evictions and the formation of the Uganda Squatters Association

(locally known as ‘Abebibanja- squatters’) Landlords Association to defend the squatters and Landlords rights respectively. This has increased insecurity of land use and continued to threaten agricultural development initiatives.

Access to land in Uganda is becoming increasingly difficult, especially for poorer segments of society, while land owners continue to hold big chunks of land which lie unused. The majority of smallholders eke out an existence on small plots of land. Their situation is compounded by the lack of security on land due to civil wars and land grabs by local and national elites. The grabbing of land by the rich has also affected most farmers. The majority poor who live in rural areas have no money to participate in land markets which are dominated by society’s elite. Through a number of discussions, many respondents argued that there is a wide gap between land availability, accessibility and utilisation. The issue of accessibility is very critical especially in areas characterised by insecurity such as Northern and North Eastern Uganda ¹⁰. The patriarchal tendencies embedded within the cultural norms of most tribal groupings limit the participation of women and youth from ownership and the eventual utilisation of land. Poor road networks and communication also negatively affect land utilisation and general agricultural development. In addition, there is need to address land degradation, especially through soil erosion (NEMA, 2005).

Water and Agricultural Production

A big proportion of Uganda’s farmers still depends on rain-fed agriculture. Although Uganda is well endowed with water resources, both surface and underground¹¹, there are limited sources of water to support the agricultural sector. Furthermore, recent rainfall patterns have been erratic and unreliable in terms of onset prediction. Large parts of Uganda, especially the North East, are partly semi-arid and they face a severe water crisis, especially during drought periods. Increasing frequent periods of drought have had adverse effects on both the quality and quantity of water resources, which has become a big challenge to the agricultural sector.

Although the importance of irrigation towards achieving food security is widely acknowledged, there has been limited corresponding investment. The country has very few irrigation schemes

¹⁰ Whereas the War in the North has now reduced fears among the people, Karamoja area remains insecure because of the constant Karimojong raids on the neighboring districts of Achill and Teso region.

¹¹ It has 42,942km² of surface water, which is 15% of the total geographical area, and much of the country receives over 750 mm of rainfall annually, although it is unevenly distributed.

and dams as alternative sources of water. Less than 1% of ordinary Ugandan farmers irrigate their land. Overall, 5% of commercial farmers use irrigation channels. These include established plantations like Kakira sugar, Kinyara sugar growers, Kibimba rice scheme, Doho irrigation scheme and flower growers in Wakiso and Mukono districts¹².

According to a 2007 report by the Internal Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), sugarcane and rice are the most irrigated crops in Uganda and the rest of the crops are rain dependent. The majority of smallholders say they have failed to adapt to irrigation because the technology used is expensive. One smallholder in Hoima remarked that “I can grow maize all year round if I had the means of irrigating my crops”.¹³ This shows that farmers are willing to engage in irrigation but only fail because of their lack of finances.

Inadequate water for livestock

In dry corridors of Uganda, animals depend on water from boreholes, water scooped from sandy riverbeds, pools that gather water during the rainy season and dams/valleys tanks which have partly silted. Lack of sufficient water supply for the animals is among the reasons why the Karimojong, among other groups, move to other regions and inevitably end in conflicts. The Karamoja region has extreme climatic variability which is also aggravated by the lack of any big permanent rivers area. Only a few perennial streams exist, with a low discharge of low, 1 – 3m³/sec. The region receives 700 – 900 mm of rainfall per year for a short period. Droughts have intensified competition for water and magnified social inequalities in such dry areas, thus impacting further on crop production. In Uganda, drought forces more and more pastoralist groups and cultivators to survive on the same limited resources. Subsequently, each group becomes more protective of their land and water.

Interventions to address the water challenges in Uganda

Past efforts to mitigate drought have included the establishment of several pilot irrigation schemes and construction of about 1,250 valley dams/tanks and about 6,200 fish ponds in most of the dry lands. This, however, has not provided a solution to the water challenge in Uganda. The artificial water sources that were constructed currently require re-appraisal and

¹² Key informant interview the staff in the, ministry of Agriculture Crop production Department.

¹³ Key informant interviewed during the farmer organisation data collection exercise.

rehabilitation. One way to increase agricultural production in Uganda is to increase the opportunities for subsistence farmers to take up irrigation using localized low cost water harvesting technologies. The main challenge to the PMA and other stakeholders envisioning agriculture development in Uganda and the entire region, is how to use the available water resources optimally, to increase productivity in crop, livestock fisheries and forestry sectors all year round.

This could be handled through building capacity to develop water resources to avail water for production on a sustainable basis. There is need for instituting an appropriate policy and regulatory framework, building the requisite research capacity for generating and demonstrating water harvesting and irrigation technologies, rehabilitating existing infrastructure including meteorological stations and soil laboratories to support early warning systems. These strategies will further help in meeting the PMA vision -“availability of water all year round for increased and sustainable commercial agricultural production without degrading the environment”.¹⁴

It is noteworthy that policy interventions in Uganda have failed to handle the issue of sharing the River Nile with Egypt for irrigation purposes. The existing agreements bar states from conducting any activity on the river without the consent of Egypt. Meanwhile, other water bodies like Lake Victoria have not been exploited for irrigation. Lake Victoria has been privatised for fishing, thus limiting crop irrigation possibilities.

Labour issues in Uganda

Agricultural labour must not only be abundant, but it should have sufficient skills. The majority of the Ugandan population engaged in agriculture at different levels lacks the requisite skills. This shortage of skills was partially caused by the low level of extension service development and information infrastructure. In addition, agricultural labour is not regulated. The country does not have a clear labour policy which specifies the minimum wage rate. Labour migration is another critical factor that has affected agricultural development in Uganda. Most rural youths have moved to towns in a form of rural urban migration. The increasing rural to urban migration of youths has left a large population of elderly and very young in the villages, which is not conducive to agricultural development. The cost of casual labour in rural areas has increased

¹⁴ The PMA final draft Uganda

over time because of the decreasing supply of labour. For example, it is estimated to have increased from 1000/= in 2005 to 3000 in 2010 in Mbale district (FGD). These trends have negatively affected the development of the agriculture sector.

The increasing levels of literacy in Uganda offer an opportunity to enhance agricultural skills. If adequately mobilised, the educated youths have the potential to adopt the extension message quicker, do marketing and engage stakeholders regarding major agricultural issues like labour skills, inputs among others. However, if the continued decrease of returns from the agricultural sector is not arrested, there is a likelihood that skilled agricultural labour will relocate into other sectors such as the urban-based services sector.

Furthermore, labour in Uganda is affected by cultural complexes. For example, in the North-East where livestock rearing is dominant, there are fewer workers available to work in crop production farms. In central region, small and informal businesses remain dominant with very minimal agricultural activity. There is a big population of (lumpen) unemployed, urban youths who wander the streets of the urban centres throughout the country. The majority of these youths are engaged in small, income-generating activities such as “*boda-boda*” riding, brick making, petty trade and service sector work. The low participation of youth in agriculture is partly attributed to issues of access and control over productive resources (land and capital), as well as limited knowledge and skills in modern farming techniques.

The Market and Agriculture

An efficiently functioning market has the capacity to transfer information, allowing the free flow of factors of production to profitable enterprises. A successful agricultural sector requires domestic markets which include a favourable environment, infrastructure, information and facilitating functions. On the other hand, there is need for international markets which include international trade rules and policies, comparative advantages and market opportunities for the developing countries. The agriculture sector in Uganda is severely affected by lack of market infrastructure. Improving market access is essential for the success of agriculture development initiatives like the PMA which has a mission to transform subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture. Farmers will only produce when their products are assured of a market outlet. “Market access” implies that the key players in the marketing chain, including farmers,

processors, inputs suppliers and other service providers have sufficient information and the physical, financial and social means to purchase inputs and sell agricultural produce on favourable terms (MAAIF, 2009).

The question of the market in Uganda requires a multi-sectoral approach.¹⁵ Farmers need to be empowered to demand these services. It is important to note that 90% of Uganda's road network consists of earth and gravel roads and about 25% of the rural feeder roads are impassable during the rainy season (PEAP, 2004). In addition, there is a myriad of community roads that are in a poor state but yet are very important to linking local communities with the market. The main means of transporting the majority of agricultural produce is through carrying of the load on the head. It is estimated to amount to about 70% of total marketed produce, undertaken mainly by women (PEAP 2004). The bicycle transports about 20% of marketed produce while motorised transport carries about 8%. Donkeys and ox-carts are used to transport the remaining 2% of marketed produce¹⁶. To improve market access, the subsistence farmer has to shift in the short to medium term to Intermediate Means of Transport (IMTs) including bicycles, donkeys, ox-carts and motorcycles, through a comprehensive government programme to improve rural transport in the country. This will help to link the rural areas to the market centres and also intensify mobility of factors of production.

Access to International Markets

The international trade rules and policies as provided for currently under World Trade Organisation (WTO), European Union (EU), COMESA, East African Co-operation (EAC), etc. provide both challenges and opportunities for market access for agricultural commodities from developing countries and Uganda in particular. As countries around the world lower their trade barriers, developing countries that depend mainly on agricultural exports will have increased access to international markets, at least in theory, provided they are able to produce competitive products with the quality standards desired in such markets.

¹⁵ An approach aligning various government Ministries and departments working in/ or that are linked to the agricultural sector such as the ministry of works, Ministry of information, Ministry of ICT, Trade and industry and investment among other sectors.

¹⁶The PMA – Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture

After a number of years of implementing the PMA, Uganda still has challenges of aligning domestic policies with international trade, developing domestic markets and generally harnessing comparative advantages through proactive government policies. The WTO and G8 countries have failed on several occasions to address issues raised by developing countries. The government of Uganda needs to find ways to exploit the value-added agricultural products market. Some of the constraints that need urgent attention are discussed below.

Lack of Economies of Scale to Supply Markets

As in other developing countries, the nature of agricultural production in Uganda is predominantly subsistence oriented with less emphasis on commercial production. Therefore, the farmers are unable to produce the quantities in line with demand orders. This leads to the loss of trust in export markets as well as loss of market share, since competitors step up their supplies. For example, Uganda has failed to meet export demand for honey and fish despite getting market assurance from the EU in early 2006 (MAAIF 2009)

Failure to Comply with Quality Assurance Standards

Standards are becoming increasingly important in international trade of food and agricultural products. The Ugandan export sector has occasionally failed to meet these standards and where attempts towards compliance have been made, the associated costs have remained high and prohibitive for the majority of exporters (MAAIF 2009).

Inadequate Flow of Market and Production Information

Market and production information are required in the making of all business decisions. However, this information is not readily and sufficiently available to agents involved in production, processing and marketing entities in Uganda. When available, there is information asymmetry as one moves up the marketing chain. The end results have always been poor production, market planning and management among others, by agents and cheating of ill-informed farmers.

Poor Linkage Between Farmers and Agribusinesses

Markets for specialized agricultural products are now on the increase. These emerging markets are specialized niche markets with specific characteristics and requirements. They call for prior planning of production and value addition infrastructure so as to match farmers' supply with market demands. Thus, there is a growing need to link producers with those value chain players

involved in agro-processing and marketing. But in Uganda such linkages, are sometimes weakly organised if available or absent altogether.

Lack of Affordable and Accessible Export Finance

Lack of suitable export development financing schemes is still a big challenge for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) engaged in agricultural commodities. Although the Bank of Uganda has instituted several export finance schemes in the past, they remain inaccessible to the majority of the small and medium exporters, not only on technical grounds but also because of high interest rates. Other sources of export finance such as micro-finance are too costly. The conventional commercial banks are reluctant to finance agriculture and agro-based export business due to their unpredictability.

Inadequate Market Infrastructure

In Uganda, agricultural production takes place in rural areas where market infrastructure is inadequate or not available at all. For successful export marketing, the kind of infrastructure required includes: good feeder roads, communication facilities, electricity, pre-cooling and pack houses, cold and dry storage facilities, refrigerated trucks, air freight facilities, and so forth. There are insufficient national export development competencies. With the politico-socio-economic complexities characterizing international trade, key competencies are needed in doing business in other countries. Exporters should be able to negotiate and execute export orders properly, as well as have reasonable knowledge in strategic export planning, management and marketing. At the moment, there is no established institution in Uganda that is responsible for training exporters on essential and basic export skills.

Presence of Non-Tariff Barriers in Export Markets

Throughout the globe, tariffs are now waning under the influence of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). But, non-tariff barriers continue to pose a big challenge to Uganda's exports. For example, in markets where Uganda's products enjoy preferential treatment such as US-AGOA market, entry into these markets remains difficult due to the challenges of meeting standards of quality, packaging, handling and so forth. Even at the regional level, nontariff barriers continue to affect Uganda's exports in the form of delayed procedures, unwarranted excuses for rejection of entry of goods, deliberate misinterpretation of COMESA and other trade provisions. It is therefore essential that Uganda builds adequate capacity in terms of competent

personnel for international trade negotiations, potentially through developing the farmer's movement in the whole country.

Inputs and Agriculture Development in Uganda

The PMA has identified the need for improved productivity in terms of yield per unit area or per unit livestock as one of its main areas of focus. This is in response to the low levels of productivity discussed earlier. Comparative trends in different sectors show a big decline and poor performance in agriculture over a number of years (table below).

Table 2: Trends in Industry, Services and Agricultural Sector Growth Rate

Sector	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Agriculture	1.6	2.0	0.5	0.1	1.3	2.6
Cash crops	7.3	-5.5	-10.6	5.4	9.0	1.7
Food crops	-1.5	-0.2	-0.1	-0.9	2.4	2.9
Livestock	4.7	3.0	1.6	3.0	3.0	3.0
Fisheries	9.6	13.5	5.6	-3.0	-11.8	-0.1
Forestry	-	6.5	4.1	2.0	2.8	3.2
Industry	8.0	11.6	14.7	9.6	9.1	3.8
Services	7.9	6.2	12.2	8.0	10.2	9.4

Source: Background to the Budget 2008/09 FY, MFPED June 2008;

UBOS, 2009 Statistical Abstract

International experience shows that agricultural productivity has grown rapidly where modern varieties and fertilisers have been widely adopted.¹⁷ Ugandan agriculture is characterised by a low application of modern inputs resulting in low yields. Fertiliser use, for instance, is among the lowest in the world, at an average of 1 kg of nutrients per hectare compared to 4kg/ha for farmers in Mozambique, 6kg/ha in Tanzania, 16kg/ha in Malawi, 31.6kg/ha in Kenya and 51kg/ha in South Africa¹⁸. The use of improved seeds stands at 6.3% of farmers while agro-chemical use is at a meagre 3.4%.

Input markets in Uganda have been difficult to develop for a number of reasons. Demand for agricultural inputs is highly variable in time and space. The demand for seed is strongest when

¹⁷ Although in those parts of Asia and Latin America where promoting seed and fertiliser use led to dynamic commercial input markets, there was also complementary investment in irrigation, rural roads, marketing infrastructure, financial services, and other factors that made using seed and fertiliser profitable.

¹⁸ MAAIF, Crop Production Department (2000)

farmers are growing hybrids, whose seed must be replaced regularly. Many farmers are growing varieties whose seeds can be saved from the harvest and replanted for several cropping seasons. The quality of seed in the market may be unknown as quality cannot be determined through visual inspection. The weak demand for fertiliser follows much the same reasoning: lack of knowledge, information asymmetries, liquidity constraints, risk and uncertainty, and high opportunity costs. Profitability tends to weigh heavily in farmers' decisions because the cost of fertiliser often represents a large share of cash production costs. When cost factors and risk factors act in tandem, as they do in a rain fed environment like Uganda, the impact on fertiliser demand can be very significant.

The low productivity can be traced to a virtual absence of modern inputs such as lack of improved varieties of crops and livestock breeds, absence of the use of improved agronomic and post-harvest technologies and very low use of critical inputs including fertilisers, pesticides and irrigation water (see the table below).

Table 3: Farmers using Agricultural Inputs

Region/Inputs	Improved seeds	Manure	Chemical Fertiliser	Pesticide, Herbicides Fungicides
Central	5.5	8.7	1.3	4.8
Eastern	11.9	4.1	1.1	4.7
Northern	7.6	0.5	0.7	2.6
Western	2.2	9.6	0.6	1.5
National	6.3	6.8	1.0	3.4

Source: UBOS (2007): UNHS 2005/06 Agricultural Module, April 2007.

The input market in Uganda is not regulated and the quality standards of the inputs are at the mercy of probability. Discussions during Focus Group (FG) meetings revealed that, in some cases the maize seeds sold in markets are only smeared with colours and put on market for sale. The input sector is managed by the private business community that sets the prices. "Many of our farmers today are conned by the middlemen who hike prices and also take advantage of their ignorance," a Focus Group member argued. Another member argued that farmers are exploited at different levels, from purchase of inputs to the point where they sell their produce. Information on the market is still inadequate, which affects the efficiency of market and the entire agricultural

sector. The FG discussions also revealed that, most of the farmers in Uganda depend on unimproved seeds which usually have low yield at the end of the day.

Another critical issue is the virtual absence of efficient distribution networks at reasonable levels. Within the PMA framework, the government through NARO and NARs is supposed to play a leading role in seed research, including production of foundation seed and developing a gene bank for the country¹⁹. “There is still a big problem with the seeds in our area. Even the cassava cuttings provided by NARO have been affected by the cassava disease. Farmers have decided to go back to the old type cassava ”²⁰.

The research on seed varieties carried out so far has had a very limited trickledown effect to the farmers. There is limited integration of research with farmers’ knowledge of how to use the research. Contrary to pillar four of CAADP, the PMA framework envisages the state’s withdrawal from agricultural seed multiplication to allow the private sector to take over. This will potentially impact negatively on the progress of the agricultural sector because many farmers cannot afford prices charged by the private dealers. There is still a considerable amount of work that needs to be done in the input sector and the Development Strategy and Investment Plan²¹ (DSIP) will potentially contribute to some of the required traction in this area.

Technology System and Extension in Uganda

The link between understanding market demands and needs at all levels (local, national and international) and technological developments require participatory approaches to research. When appropriate productivity-enhancing technological packages and innovations have been identified, farmers need to be part of the implementation and impact evaluation. It is one thing to produce new technologies but quite another to have them adopted by farmers. The importance of agricultural advisory services in rural development is widely appreciated. Finding the appropriate approach, coverage and performance of the system and ways to improve its quality and impact remain challenging. This debate has taken place within the evolving context of the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) programme, an innovative extension delivery

¹⁹ The PMA strategy final draft op cit

²⁰ Key informant interview with district officer in Soroti District Eastern Uganda

²¹ MAAIF Development Strategy and Investment Plan (2010/11 – 2014/15) is the Uganda National Agriculture Policy finalized in 2009. this plan was designed considering the CAADP pillars and it addresses most of the critical issues affecting the agricultural sector

approach that targeted the development and use of farmer institutions. Thus, the great question of the time in Uganda is how the agricultural technological research benefits the rural farmers, given the current low level of technology employed.

Evaluations of NAADS have been consistently favourable. In 2005, two independent studies (Scanagri 2005; OPM 2005) observed that NAADS had positively influenced the increasing use of improved technologies, marketed output, and wealth status of farmers involved in the programme. More recently, two more major independent evaluations described the programme as successful (NAADS Performance Evaluation - ITAD, 2008; and NAADS Impact Evaluation (IFPRI, 2009). The latter found “clear positive impacts on adoption of improved technologies, productivity and per capita incomes” (MAAIF 2009).

Despite these successes, a number of challenges have emerged. The key institutional issue is the limited integration of the programme into the local government systems. This is a big challenge since the success of NAADS is critically dependent on the commitment and involvement of other stakeholders at district, sub-county and community level. This has affected service delivery at sub-counties especially with frontline extension workers. At the operational level the critical bottlenecks are:

- Inadequate number of service providers on the ground. In addition, the technical capacity of those available is limited relative to the demand for support beyond production, in order to embrace marketing and value chain development.
- The limiting nature of the Ministry of finance budgetary ceilings and the inconsistent flow of funds that jeopardises crop agriculture activities at the peak season. If farmers are to utilise resources efficiently, funds released to sub-counties have to be according to two main production seasons and not according to government’s quarterly schedule.
- Lack of accountability, poor transparency and corruption in procurement, especially at lower implementation levels. This has impacted negatively on the public perception of NAADS.
- The need to embed the advisory services much better within the agricultural innovation system through strengthening the farmer-extension-research linkage.

- Rigid procurement processes which slow down programme implementation and contribute significantly to the reluctance of suppliers to engage with NAADS which in turn leads to higher prices for technologies supplied under NAADS (MAAIF, 2010).

The hand hoe is still the predominant means for land tillage and other secondary operations in Uganda's agriculture. It is used by virtually all smallholder farmers, i.e. 95% of the farming population. The lack of more efficient farm power at the household level has a substantial negative impact on agricultural production and household food security. Land preparation using a hoe is very laborious and time consuming. Weeding is a critical activity and a major determinant of final yields. Many households respond to the shortage of draught power by scaling down their activities, reducing the area under cultivation (by up to 50%)²² and growing a limited range of crops. There can be no doubt that the productivity of the labour-force is massively compromised by a lack of physical energy and poor quality tools. Inappropriate selection and use of improved mechanisation inputs (mainly tractors and heavy machinery) have led to heavy financial losses and lower agricultural production as well as environmental degradation in many parts of Uganda.

Extension Service Delivery in Uganda

There still remains a critical gap in the efficient delivery of extension services to smallholders in many parts of the country. The history of extension services in Uganda follows distinct stages. The first stage is the Early Colonial Period (1898-1907), during which importation of cash crop planting materials namely coffee, cotton, rubber, and tobacco took place (NAADS, 2004). There was also establishment of research stations to carry out agriculture and forestry research in Uganda. The second stage was the Extension Service through Chiefs (1920-1956). Chiefs carried out extension work, assisted by a few expatriate field officers and African instructors. The emphasis was on distributing planting materials of major cash crops and simple messages on how to grow those crops. This was coupled with enforcing by-laws requiring households to grow certain crops in accordance with agricultural practices such as soil conservation and storage of famine food reserves. The chiefs' status and influence made farmers use good husbandry

²²http://www.fao.org/ag/ags/subjects/en/farmpower/pdf/KENYA_LABOUR_SAVING_STUDY.pdf: Labour Saving Technologies and Practices for farming and household activities in Eastern and Southern Africa.

practices, proper land use and ensured household food security. The extension approach was coercion using sanctions and punishments rather than education.

The third phase was from 1956 until 1963 and it was associated with Extension through the more successful farmers (commonly referred to as the progressive farmers). The expectation was that improved performance of progressive farmers would have a demonstration and multiplier effect for increased agricultural production and productivity (NAADS, 2004). The approach was effective in situations where the number of trained extension staff was limited. Some farmers were successful in influencing their peers and served as the catalysts of improved farming. However, the criteria used for selection of progressive farmers were questionable and produced mixed results. Many of the selected farmers abused the special support given to them in form of credit and subsidized inputs. Some progressive farmers were not cooperative and willing to serve as contact farmers for educating others. Other farmers looked at progressive farmers as a privileged. The same kind of system is currently being re-implemented with the focus on six progressive households and it is suffering from the same challenges as the first similar arrangement²³.

During the period from 1964 until 1972, Uganda's extension approach changed to "helping farmers to help themselves". This educational process was facilitated by field days which included the use of tours to farmers who were doing well. However, during the same period extension drifted into focusing on selling inputs to farmers at the neglect and detriment of delivery of services. This state of affairs together with the lack of an agricultural extension policy led to the disorganisation, dormancy of extension services and low productivity experienced during the years of political turmoil from 1970 to 1980.

The period 1980 to 1991 was regarded as the 'Recovery Period'. In the early part of this period there was marked emphasis on rehabilitation of the infrastructure and restoration of basic services (NAADS, 2004). Until 1991, there were parallel extension services in different ministries and non-government organisations. However, there was little improvement in extension services due to duplication, conflict and confusion. Later, a new policy on agricultural

²³ The six member extension service focus in Uganda is highly politicized to the extent of considering party supported by the member household benefiting from the programme. The future of the arrangement is not predictable.

extension services, supported by the World Bank, was put in place in 1990. The policy was accompanied by the Merger of Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Animal Industry and Fisheries now called Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF). This approach emphasised use of dialogue to promote participation. In this way farmers' indigenous knowledge was generated through use of participatory approaches with research/extension facilitation.

From 1992 to 1997, the government introduced Agricultural Extension Education/ Reforms. During this period many international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) came into play and were mostly backed by external funding. NGOs used different methods and approaches for extension delivery. This is also the period when neoliberal reforms such as decentralisation, liberalisation, privatisation, restructuring and retrenchment were implemented. Retrenchment led to reduction of staff in the field and districts lacked capacity to steer the extension role. As a result, staff lost morale and farmers access to extension services reduced considerably. Coupled with this, negative farmers' perception of extension staff hindered adoption of new technologies (Kibwika and Semana, 1998). It was during this period that the formulation of the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) was launched. In the process, the World Bank withheld further support to extension and research in favour of PMA.

This was also followed by the period 1998 to 2002 which is referred to as 'Crossroad and Possible Future Solutions Period'.²⁴ During this period, the funding and delivery of services was neither efficient nor sustainable. Generally, the extension system was heavily centralised and characterised by too much bureaucracy. A number of options and approaches were considered in the reform of extension service systems in Uganda. One option was for government to continue injecting resources into the ministry-based extension system. This however, was ruled out due to other policy reforms that had been carried out in the agricultural sector. Government had committed itself to public sector reform and downsizing of the extension system in the country.

The new policies of the day emphasised liberalisation, decentralisation, privatisation and private-sector-led economic development. However, the ministry-based approach was incompatible with

²⁴ At the time, evaluation of the agricultural extension projects showed that the unified agricultural extension was unfocused, reached only 15% of the farmers and its messages and approaches were neither effective nor provided value for money.

the new policies. During this period, there was gradual withdrawal of international NGOs from direct service delivery to working through government, and Community Based Organisations (CBOs). Donors increased their support to Government to ensure that the reform policies including PMA worked as per the specified vision and objectives. As a way forward, it was suggested that a semi-autonomous body, with strong farmer involvement, be formed to run extension service delivery, in line with the government policies of decentralisation, liberalisation, privatisation and to spur increased participation of farmers in decision-making.

Agricultural extension services in Uganda gained strength with the establishment of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) in 1997. The PEAP provided for agriculture development which resulted in the establishment of the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA). The ultimate goal of the PMA was to address the factors that undermine agricultural productivity including limited access to technical advice (Tizikara, et al 2008). The need for reforms in the national extension systems led to the establishment of National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS)²⁵ as the main driving element behind the implementation of the PMA. The NAADS framework provides for the shift from public to private extension service provision and giving smallholder farmers access to relevant services by outsourcing (Tizikara et al 2008:83). The National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) was therefore created to empower farmers, especially women, to demand and control agricultural advisory services in the country. The NAADS was put in place by an Act of Parliament in May 2001 (NAADS 2004)²⁶. Private service providers including the NGOs and registered individual extension workers are contracted to provide agricultural extension services. It requires the formation of farmers' organisations to register at various levels. They mobilise farmers to form farmers groups that are then facilitated to farmer's organisations at parish, sub-county or district level. Their organisations are registered with the district under the NGO statute. By the end of 2006, the NAADS outsourcing program was operating in 532 sub-counties, located in 64 districts. By 2005, over 12,000 Farmers groups (FGs) in 280 sub-counties had been registered through the program, while 73% of the FGs

²⁵ At the same time the National Agricultural Research System (NARS), mainly represented by National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) was also reformed.

²⁶ First networking symposium on innovations in agricultural advisory services in sub-Saharan Africa Proceedings Kampala, Uganda, 11th -14th October 2004

reported receiving outsourced agricultural advisory services (Byekwaso, et al 2004). By 2005, up to 400,000 households representing 30% of the total households in Uganda are estimated to have benefited from the NAADS programmes (NAADS 2005d, Tizikara, et al 2008).

However, the impact of NAADS is still very insignificant. The programme is associated with allegations of corruption and misuse of funds and this has negatively affected the possibility of establishing sustainable demonstration farms. Farmers in most parts of the country complain of poor seeds, usually not given on time and also lack of skills to manage the inputs given. Secondly, the few extension professionals in the system are poorly motivated, unskilled and lack appropriate competencies in terms of participatory skills, knowledge, facilitator mindsets and behaviour required for working with farmers in a demand driven manner (Lindley 2000).

Furthermore, there is still need to strengthen partnerships between NAADS and other significant players in the agro-industry. These players can be a source of the needed technologies or focal points for marketing farmers' outputs. However, this study discovered that partners look at NAADS as a source of funding and farmers still fear that these partners are not playing fairly. The local government leadership in some areas is not comfortable with these partnerships (NAADS, 2004).

Resource mobilisation within the Farmer Groups established by the NAADS is still affected by poverty that is in almost every household. It is generally believed that farmers are so poor, they can do little for themselves. Though farmers are capable of pooling some resources together to build up group capital for development, strategies are still insufficient to promote intra-group resource mobilisation to reduce capital scarcity within the farmers' groups. In the 2009/2010 budget, the Minister of Finance argued that in the financial year, emphasis will be placed on consolidation of the agricultural extension service through the restructured NAADS, integrating it with the provision of inputs to farmers. The Government of Uganda planned to provide integrated support to six farmers per parish, with an estimated total of 30,000 farmers annually. These farms are intended to serve as demonstration sites to others and support them to graduate into commercial farmers (MFPED, 2009; 14)²⁷. However this plan has been hampered by the limited budgetary allocation to agriculture.

²⁷ MFPED—Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development

Gender Relations and Agriculture

In Uganda, women's main occupation is agriculture. According to the Uganda 2002 Population Census, the agricultural sector employed a higher proportion of women (83 %) than men (71%). At the same time, a substantial amount of women's time is taken up in providing care activities. The key constraints to women's participation in commercial agriculture in Uganda are: their uncertain relations to land and the limited returns available to them as they lack the incentive to undertake long term investment. The Land Act 1998 in S.40 requires that before any transaction can be carried out on land on which a family resides or from which it derives sustenance, the spouse, dependent children of majority age and the Land Committee (in case of children under the age of majority) should be consulted. In accordance with constitutional provisions, the Land Act also mandates that any customary practices which deny women, children or any other disadvantaged groups use of any land shall be null and void. The Land Committees have the duty of ensuring that the rights of vulnerable groups are protected (Rugadya M, 1999; 7). However, all these laws remain as 'Acts' in books among the rural, less educated or uneducated women farmers. Patriarchal practices continue to impact decisions on land compared to formal procedures. Generally, women prefer petty trading to agriculture because of their marginalisation regarding land and because of limited benefit from the proceeds of their labour invested in agriculture.

Education for women is another intervention to improve their participation and benefit in the agricultural sector. The GoU established the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development with the aim of engendering the development programmes. All the development plans of the agriculture sector include gender as a key crosscutting issue.

Role of Non-State Actors in Influencing Agricultural Policy

Uganda, like many other African countries, lacks a robust and competent civil society. It is also important to note that civil society based advocacy for improved agricultural policies is a fairly recent phenomenon. A national smallholders' union; the Uganda National Farmers Federation exists. However its impact on policy is very limited and it does not currently have sufficient mobilisation mechanisms to recruit members. It still lacks the required resources to mobilise for a massive farmer movement in the mould, of for example, NASFAM in Malawi (see chapter four of this volume). The non-state policy advocacy space is currently dominated by international

NGOs such as FAO, DANIDA, JICA, USAID and the WFP among others, and donors in general play a significant role in policy making. The role of donors and international organisations in agricultural policy and broader rural development cannot be underestimated. The Ugandan budget is still 35% donor dependent²⁸. The actual voice of the smallholder and participation has not been given priority. This has at times resulted in strategies that do not address the farmers needs.

The operation of most NGOs and CBOs in Uganda is not fully integrated to make direct demands for policy reforms. However, their existence provides an opportunity for mobilisation in this arena of policy advocacy. Currently their operations have been mostly “politically linked statements” made by the leaderships of these formations. The government agricultural development in line with NAADS programme depends on local government structures which, as already discussed above, do not have the adequate capacity for policy implementation²⁹. Such a situation frustrates agricultural transformation in Uganda.

Most local organisations do not have sufficient financial and human resources to address the agricultural policy issues. Local organisations do not have stable funding; instead they depend on small grants from international NGOs and private philanthropic foundations that are mostly based in the West. The farmers groups that work with the NAADS work to implement extension services and tend to breakdown often. They are very limited in their operation. They have been baptized as “NAADS Groups”.³⁰ Otherwise, the groups can be a very important role for mobilising the farmers into stronger advocacy and union groups.

Agriculture Policy Interventions in Uganda

Uganda has been without a comprehensive agricultural policy for a long time. The PMA, NAADS and the current Agriculture Development Strategy and Investment Plan (ADSIP) for 2010 to 2015 are some of the most recent attempts at comprehensive agriculture and rural development policy making. In 2007, it was estimated that nearly 40,000 farmers groups and over 700,000 farming households were benefiting from the NAADS interventions (NAADS

²⁸ Uganda National Budget 2009/2010

²⁹ During the development of this paper, a scenario was encountered where two district agricultural offices were visited for information on farmers organisations operating in the areas and no record existed. This is also coupled by less function offices, limited attendance in offices and supervision of activities.

³⁰ Being called NAADS means that farmers do not feel the ownership and transformative role the groups could play.

2007). The ADSIP has been designed in line with the CAADP agenda framework. It is estimated that the successful implementation of this strategy will improve the rate of agricultural growth to 6% annually by 2015 (MAAIF, 2009).

The recent launch of the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) provides an opportunity for the integration of technology into agricultural practices. However, there is an urgent need for the GoU to formulate an agricultural research policy (or at least specify goals and targets in this area). This would help to guide utilisation and development of the agricultural technology and research. The new land policy (2010) is another vital step for Uganda in addressing the land question. The long period of land crises has been blamed for stagnation in addressing agricultural problems related to the land tenure problems³¹.

Areas in Need of Strengthening

Institution Building

There is need to empower the end users to ensure meaningful participation in setting priorities and work programmes for research extension and training in order to ensure their relevance. Farmer empowerment in Uganda requires targeting all smallholder groups, associations and organisations. This will potentially enable farmers to express their demands and provide access to information as well as create access to decentralised and community-based extension centres, research and advisory services among others.

Institution building through sensitisation and mobilising smallholder farmers associations and national producer's organisations to provide more efficient services should be at the core of these initiatives. Farmer's organisations and groups need to be assisted to participate in policy making, priority setting and administration of advisory service systems. Such a process of institutional building and strengthening the farmers' association and organisations should lead to:

- Improved mobilisation and sensitisation and the reviving of the cooperative societies and marketing boards that earlier used to help farmers in Uganda in agricultural produce marketing.

³¹ Based on discussion during the 'Land Use and Villagisation' Workshop held at hotel de mille Collines, Kigali 20-21 September 1999 and paper Rugarya, M. 1999. Land Reforms: The Ugandan Experience. Uganda Land Alliance.

- A more coordinated and inclusive framework for the engagement of farmers to improve the design and implementation of policies
- Improved governance processes within participating organisations and also to ensure that elite capture is avoided.

Increased Mobilisation

Farmers need to be mobilised to form large groups and strengthen existent organised farmer groups. This will enable them to engage government service providers and demand accountability in areas such as policy formulation, implementation and monitoring of infrastructure development projects. There is an urgent need among farmers to identify ways in which the inhibitive agro-taxation regimes (inputs and services) can be removed or reformed.

Advocacy and Capacity Development

The farmers need to be equipped through awareness raising workshops on policy provisions and their own entitlement. Farmers should be at the centre of agricultural innovation in agriculture. They need to be active players in improving agricultural productivity, not only in terms of increasing their yields, but also in decision making and how programmes and policies are shaped. They need to be empowered to be active players in policy making, research, extension education and partners of development agencies in joint accountability.

Strengthening Farmer Information and Communication

The information channels ‘market failures’ are caused by low levels of market activity, high transport, communication and transaction costs, weak contractual enforcement institutions, and supply chain failures (FAO, 2008)³². Market thresholds can be addressed by supporting market actors (e.g. with market information systems). There is limited utilisation of research due to communication deficiencies, low advocacy space and limited scientific and innovation packaged research to steer rural service delivery and engender development. Lack of EWS (early warning systems) to arrest and contain crop and animal epidemics, inhibitive land tenure systems

³² Linking Social Protection and Support to Small Farmer Development Report of a workshop held at FAO, Rome, on 17-18 January, 2008

(customary fragmentations, population pressure) and land conflicts impact negatively on the trends of agricultural development.

Conclusion

Smallholder-led policy advocacy is critical to the realisation of the intended goals of CAADP. Although there is renewed interest in agriculture due to the CAADP intervention, there are a number of issues that are yet to be resolved. The recently signed CAADP compact does not clarify how it will address the unfavourable international agreements relating to agriculture products and marketing which usually leave farmers from the developing countries at a disadvantage in the global agricultural market. Furthermore, the envisaged growth of the agriculture sector should be used to create employment opportunities for the vast untapped labour force currently migrating into urban areas, with no hope of securing formal employment.

A robust agricultural movement will strengthen Ugandan farmers' capacity to build human and institutional capacities to articulate and defend the smallholder sector agriculture. The other important issue relates to technology and extension services for sound agriculture evolution. The concerted farmers' efforts to demand and influence policy will serve as an entry point towards broadening citizen participation in development policies and programmes. The Ugandan government and the people need to appreciate the potential benefits of engaging within organised and equipped civil society groups. The agricultural sector will therefore be developed with a strong foundation of empowered farmers and development nationalism within the leadership structures coupled with strong institutions.

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