



The Communiqué

From

THE THIRD UGANDA NATIONAL
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION
e-SYMPIOSIUM
2020

Under the theme

Positioning Agricultural Extension and
Advisory Services (AEAS) for Resilient
Agriculture and Food Systems



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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PREAMBLE

The Uganda Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (UFAAS), a country Chapter of the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) organized the third Uganda National Agricultural Extension e-Symposium 2020. This was successfully held at a time of unprecedented challenges (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) between 20th and 30th July, 2020. The theme of the symposium was **“Positioning Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (AEAS) for Resilient Agriculture and Food Systems in Uganda”**. The overall objective of the symposium was to provide space for the different AEAS actors and stakeholders to deliberate on how AEAS can effectively and efficiently contribute to national agriculture and food systems, amidst the natural calamities of COVID-19, floods, landslides, desert locusts and others.

The symposium brought together a total of 962 (29 % females) delegates from Uganda and 33¹ other countries (17 Africa and 16 beyond) mainly members of the Global Forum for Rural Advisory (GFRAS) and Africa Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) networks. The delegates from Uganda represented diverse sectors including: public, academia, farmers, CSOs, private sector, media and Development Partners. The opening and closing events of the symposium were presided over by the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Hon. Vincent Bamulangaki Ssempijja (MP) and the Director, Department of Agricultural Extension Services, Mrs. Beatrice Byarugaba.

DECLARATION

We, the participants from the 34 countries mentioned above, attending the third Uganda National Agricultural e-Extension Symposium, on this **30th day of July, 2020,**

AWARE THAT:

1. Worldwide, no country has succeeded in transforming its agriculture without sufficiently investing in the agricultural extension system.
2. There are different policy instruments and supportive legal frameworks that recognize the role of non-state actors (NSAs) as well as play a critical role in the effectiveness of the AEAS system.
3. There is a wide appreciation and increasing use of ICT4Agric by agricultural value chain actors and beneficiaries (including farmers and AEAS actors), with a potential for a balanced mechanism of using e-extension and conventional extension methods for effective delivery.
4. There are emerging CSA practices and models (for example Climate Smart Villages, Remote Farm Logs Model, Saemal Undung Korean Model, etc.) and that these continue to be promoted amongst AEAS actors at different levels.
5. There is already a platform (UFAAS) that brings together diverse AEAS actors to participate in information and knowledge sharing, capacity development, professionalization and lobby and advocacy for the AEAS system.
6. An e-friendly registration process has been developed and launched for all the different categories of AEAS actors, and is awaiting rolling out to districts.
7. Efforts have been invested in promoting accountability mechanisms through use of the e-Extension Diary for public Agricultural Extension Officers and professionalization through the on-going e-registration of AEAS actors.
8. FAO has developed an AEAS assessment methodology to guide decision making or influence action at Country level and also supported a study entitled “Analyzing and Prioritizing Climate Change-Related Capacities and Needs of National and Sub-National Extension Actors in Uganda”.
9. Efforts have been made to effectively manage and distribute quality agricultural inputs through use of models for example Regional Farmers Service Centres (RFSCs) and emerging nursery operators within the communities.

¹Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi, Somalia, Israel, Ethiopia, Zambia, China, South Sudan, India, United Republic of Tanzania, Australia, Switzerland, Burkina Faso, Niger, Cameroon, Togo, Denmark, Germany, Comoros, Angola, Saudi Arabia, Hungary, Colombia, Belgium, Madagascar, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Afghanistan, Argentina, Mali, Benin, United Arab Emirates and Republic of Korea.

CONCERNED THAT:

1. Despite agriculture being key to attaining Uganda's target of achieving middle income status by 2040, close to 69% of its producers are subsistence smallholder farmers.
2. The sector is neither efficient nor resilient to the natural calamities including extreme weather events such as floods, locust's invasion and COVID-19.
3. Despite the existence of a well formulated policy regime of the AEAS system, it still experiences weak coordination of diverse actors, poor implementation mechanisms(??), low financing and low institutional capacity to support AEAS activities.
4. The different policy instruments and supportive legal frameworks critical to AEAS, but are housed in different ministries and operate in silos.
5. The current level of knowledge and skills of AEAS actors does not meet the required capacities for addressing the diverse challenges of climate change.
6. Much as the e-registration process is developed and functional, with a well laid out road map for rolling down to the districts, it lacks funds to .actualize it
7. Much as there are rising opportunities for more people to engage in urban agriculture, apart from the Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) Ordinances of 2006, there is no substantive legal framework to guide the activity, outside Kampala. Worse still, all the relevant policy documents in agricultural are silent on the practice.
8. Given the many players, especially the youth, innovating e-extension models to support timely AEAS, they are still uncoordinated and cannot fully complement conventional extension service system.
9. Despite a number of initiatives and efforts in engaging youth, the AEAS still has a great role in building the capacity of youth to benefit from the initiatives and also changing any negative perception. Secondly, these youths are not a homogenous group.
10. With the increasing number of universities and institutions that offer agricultural Extension Education and demand for practical driven model approaches, there are challenges of investment in and capacity to carry out non-traditional teaching methods like on-line and distance learning.
11. Given the various channels for agricultural inputs delivery in Uganda, including public programmes and the private sector actors, access to quality inputs is still a challenge and this was worsened by the Corvid 19 lockdown.
12. Much as there are different efforts bringing together different AEAS actors, there is need for a joint effort to coordinate all these efforts and increase opportunities for cross learning. This can be made possible by identifying, developing, promoting and strengthening existing or new initiatives towards this effort.

THEREFORE, THERE IS A CALL UPON A RANGE OF STAKEHOLDERS TO UNDERTAKE THESE CONCERTED ACTIONS:

Integrate approaches and strengthen capacities for scaling up Climate Smart Agriculture

1. Coordinate and harmonize efforts of AEAS actors in CSA and strengthen their capacities to participate and contribute to implementation of CSA activities
2. Integrate Agricultural and digital technology approaches in Climate Smart Agricultural practices for example Climate Smart Village, Remote Farm Logs Model, Saemal Undung Korean Model, etc.
3. Integrate and out scale social protection services like insurance, saving schemes, risk assessments, weather forecast, etc. to mitigate the effects of climate change while promoting active involvement of different stakeholders to adopt and implement proven coping strategies.

Coordinate, Build Capacity and Promote Access of Digital innovations for AEAS use

1. Provide a mechanism for coordinating digital innovations and efforts amongst e-extension models players and users to complement conventional extension service system.
2. Build the capacity of AEAS service providers, especially the youth in the use of digital innovations, and equip them for effective and efficient service delivery across the commodity value chains.
3. The Government and NSA organisations in AEAS should come up with practical ways of equipping their agricultural extension staff with ICT tools and services (e.g. smart phones, laptops and internet to ensure increased access and use of ICT based services by extension actors and beneficiaries (farmers and others) especially the youths.
4. Promote youth in Agriculture programmes, bearing in mind the fact that they are not a homogenous group and hence target initiatives and interventions to different categories

Coordinate innovative approaches and AEAS actors for an effective AEAS system

1. Coordinate innovative approaches in the management and distribution of agricultural inputs through a well-regulated decentralized last-mile agro-input distribution system.
2. Support and strengthen UFAAS to facilitate the coordination of actors and increase opportunities for cross learning e.g. symposium and joint resource mobilization for the diverse AEAS actors.

Policy instruments and regulatory framework for effective delivery of AEAS

1. Establish an independent mechanism to coordinate and harmonize implementation of issues critical to AEAS policy instruments and enforce their compliance to promote professionalism and accountability of the Agricultural Extension and Advisory system, for example adopt and operationalize the piloted FAO AEAS assessment methodology and measurement of outcomes; the Ethical Code of conduct, Standards and guidelines and e-Registration and accreditation of extension actors.
2. Fast track the enactment of National Agricultural Extension Bill 2017 to foster good governance and coordinated operationalization of the pluralistic extension system.
3. Formulate a national policy to guide urban and peri-urban agriculture. Urban authorities should include urban agriculture in the physical planning of urban areas, cities and towns and include budgets for supporting women and youth in agricultural programmes.