



Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
Plot 96, Kanjokya Street, Kamwokya
P. O. Box 29836, Kampala Tel: +256 312 812150
Email: acode@acode-u.org; library@acode-u.org
Website: <http://www.acode-u.org>

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TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURE FOR WEALTH CREATION

Involvement of UPDF in NAADS Programme and its Effectiveness



By Barbara Ntambirweki-Karugonjo & Emma Jones

ABSTRACT

In 2001, the government launched the National Agriculture Advisory Services (NAADS) programme with the overall goal of supporting transformation of the agriculture sector from subsistence to commercial farming. Over the years, the NAADS programme has been riddled with corruption and misappropriation of funds, poor distribution of seedlings to farmers, and politicization of selection of beneficiaries. In June 2014, President Museveni announced that the army would be entrusted with the role of transforming Agriculture. Frustrated by the challenges in the agriculture sector, President Museveni decided to redesign the NAADS programme by deploying UPDF officers to Luweero

and parts of Eastern Uganda on a pilot basis to carry out roles hitherto meant for NAADS. The outcome was that these military officers posted impressive results within just two years. Building on the success of that pilot programme in boosting agricultural production, the commander of Operation Wealth Creation, General Caleb Akandwanaho, launched a partnership between Makerere University College of Agricultural and Environment Sciences (CAES), NAADS and Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) to implement the new NAADS model. The goal of the partnership is to share knowledge and skills that address challenges facing agricultural production in Uganda, focusing particularly on the reduction of post-harvest losses and managing the supply and distribution of quality inputs to farmers.

In order to trigger a deeper understanding about policy

shift in the Agriculture sector, the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) organized the 56th State of the Nation Platform to deliberate on the future of agriculture in Uganda and, particularly the role of the military in implementation of NAADS. The theme of the session was “Transformation of Agriculture for Wealth Creation: Involvement of UPDF in NAADS Programme and its Effectiveness.”

A. INTRODUCTION

“The Government disburses 120 billion shillings to districts for NAADS activities every year. There is no change in economic status of rural beneficiaries. This money always stops at the top in salaries of NAADS Coordinators and the real beneficiaries do not get any money. Therefore we have to restructure and have all NAADS coordinators out!”

The 56th State of the Nation (STON) Platform focused on the future of agriculture in Uganda and in particular the role of the military in implementation of NAADS. The dialogue brought together government, academic, technical, Civil Society and private sector participants to engage in open and honest discussions about transformation of the agriculture sector. The speakers for the session included Prof. Bernard Bashaasha from Makerere University, who discussed the partnership between Makerere University, College of Agriculture and Environment Sciences and Dr. Samuel Mugasi, Executive Director, NAADS presented on the Status and Challenges of the NAADS programme particularly the involvement of the UPDF officers in the NAADS programme. Mr Morrison Rwakakamba, Executive Director Agency for Transformation discussed the presentations and made recommendations for transforming agriculture in the country. The session was chaired by Hon. Beti Kamywa, President of the Uganda Federal Alliance. The overall objective of the 56th STON was to create a common understanding of critical challenges to NAADS and the role of UPDF in addressing some of the issues that have undermined the effectiveness of the programme. The objectives of the 56th STON were as follows:

1. To promote a deeper understanding of NAADS in transforming the agricultural sector in Uganda from the point of view of technical leaders, political leaders, farmers, the private sector and the NAADS Secretariat.
2. To understand the recent interventions and current strategies undertaken at the national and district levels to improve the agricultural sector, particularly the future of NAADS and UPDF involvement, and whether strategies are clearly understood by the citizens.
3. To provide an opportunity for political leaders

¹ Monitor Newspaper, 2014; President Museveni speaking at Celebrations to mark 28 years of NRM int Mayuge District in Eastern Uganda.

and key stakeholders to understand the new structure of NAADS including the working relationships between academia, government and civil society organizations in transforming the NAADS programme.²

B. BRIEF BACKGROUND TO THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN UGANDA

The agriculture sector in Uganda employs approximately 66% of the country’s working population.³ The Ministry of Agricultural Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) is tasked with increasing rural incomes and livelihoods through improved household food and nutrition security. MAAIF oversees eight semi-autonomous agencies, one of which is the National Agricultural Advisory Service – NAADS.⁴ The NAADS programme encompasses four areas of activity: advisory and information services to farmers; technology development and linkages to markets; technical auditing of service providers; and private sector institutional development. NAADS operates as a public-private extension service delivery approach geared towards increasing market-oriented agricultural production by empowering farmers to demand and control agricultural services. As NAADS receives the majority of the agricultural budget it is largely synonymous with agriculture in Uganda as it operates visibly and widely at local government level.

However, NAADS programme has received wide criticisms not only from those expecting to benefit from the services, but also from independent evaluations.⁵ The criticisms focus on NAADS as a project that has failed to account for large amounts of taxpayers’ money. The Government decided to explore a shift to a unified (single spine) agricultural extension system handled exclusively by the MAAIF. However, recently, the UPDF veterans were mandated by the President to work within the NAADS structure. An often heard criticism of this strategy is that the military lacks the expertise to carry out effective extension in the sector.

- ² Partnership between NAADS Programme, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Makerere University and the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF).
- ³ Uganda National Bureau of Statistics (2013) Statistical Abstract. [Available; www.ubos.org.]
- ⁴ The NAADS programme started following an Act of Parliament in 2001 and has two project phases to support a 25 year vision. The initial seven years for the first phase cover FY2001/2002 - 2007/2008, estimated by NAADS to cost US\$108 million. There is little available information on Phase II funding.
- ⁵ See for example, Barungi, J. (2013). Agri-Food System Governance and Service Delivery in Uganda: A Case Study of Tororo District. ACODE Policy Research Series, No.61. Kampala, Uganda. Rwakakamba and Lukwago (2014). The changing face of NAADS and what the entry of Uganda People’s Defence Forces will mean for Uganda’s agriculture. Public Policy Issue Paper No: 004/2014. Agency for Transformation (www.agencyft.org), Kampala, Uganda; and Okoboi, G., Kuteesa, A., & Barungi, M. (2013). The Impact of the National Agricultural Advisory Services Program on Household Production and Welfare in Uganda. African Growth Initiative. Working Paper, 7.

It is against this background that ACODE organised the 56th STON to explore and clarify the proposed military involvement in the NAADS programme, to understand the scope and scale of planned activities and the status and challenges of implementing agricultural development. At the time of organizing this STON, there was an information vacuum regarding the proposed intervention by the UPDF into the implementation of NAADS.

C. PRESENTATIONS

Presenter: Prof. Bernard Bashaasha, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES) Makerere University



Figure 2: Prof. Bernard Bashaasha making a presentation at the 56th State of Nation Platform

Prof. Bernard Bashaasha's presentation focused on the role of the partnership between Makerere University's College of Agriculture and Environment Sciences (CAES), UPDF and NAADS in transforming agriculture in the country. He noted that the agriculture sector is a strategic sector that is critical to ensuring food security to the nation, adding that countries like Norway and Japan have involved the army in agricultural production. Therefore, to transform and reorient Uganda's agriculture sector, there is need to speed up growth, reduce post-harvest losses, accelerate value addition, and reorganize agriculture's role in food security in Uganda. He also pointed out that agriculture has a very strong security dimension which justifies the involvement of the armed forces.

Prof. Bashaasha observed that that Makerere University (CAES) partnership with the UPDF is necessary to ensure that the agriculture sector is expert-led and knowledge driven. The University plays

a pivotal role in knowledge application by training the UPDF staff to oversee the new NAADS initiatives, and in effectively managing the results from the farmers. It was noted that CAES was already working with the UPDF by training officers over a three week period to impart basic skills on topics like; agricultural mechanisation, irrigation, crop and animal husbandry and aquaculture. The new NAADS model is expected to add new players and strategies and, in the case of the partnership with Makerere University, to draw on institutional strengths and the adoption of knowledge for application. Prof. Bashaasha stressed that UPDF was to work within the NAADS framework with original NAADS players who remain fully engaged.

With regard to the nature of NAADS, CAES and UPDF partnership, three priority areas of cooperation have

been agreed namely; 1) to support a single spine agricultural extension system after the reform of NAADS, 2) to support post-harvest management and value addition, 3) to support production, supply and distribution of quality tree and forest planting materials. Prof. Bashaasha revealed that CAES brings a variety of competencies to this partnership, including access to application of knowledge; demonstrating success with business incubation activities to support

agro processing and value addition in agriculture. A diversity of national and international partners to draw on, including Harvard University and MIT; and a guaranteed regular supply of qualified human resource capacity to move the sector forward. He also pointed out that Makerere University was not a stranger to partnership with armed forces, as CAES had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Uganda Prisons and Uganda Police Force to support their agricultural activities. With respect to competencies of the army, he stated that they possessed discipline, integrity, passion and accountability. Advocating for the participation of the army in agriculture, Prof. Bashaasha noted that armies the world over were vanguards of economic development. He noted that since the involvement of the UPDF in September 2013 the following inputs have been delivered to farmers; 412,090 Mango seedlings, 27.3 million coffee seedlings, 846,756 Orange seedlings, 4,199,355 Tea seedlings, 2,063.5 tonnes of maize, 869.1 tonnes of beans, 48,243 bags of cassava cutting, 438,000 tree seedlings and 10,000 banana tissues.

Prof. Bashaasha concluded his presentation by stating that Ugandans would like to see the agriculture industry as a strong sector in the economy, one that provides employment and wealth, feeds the nation, a source of foreign exchange, and above all is the foundation of national security.

Presenter: Dr. Samuel Mugasi, Executive Director, NAADS



Figure 3: Dr. Samuel Mugasi making his remarks at the session

Dr. Mugasi's presentation focused on the roles of and relationships between NAADS, Local Government, Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) and the UPDF. He started his presentation by explaining the need to transform agriculture due to high world population growth rates and the need to grow food to feed the growing population. He explained that Africa has 60% of the world's arable land yet Africa was importing food worth 35 billion US dollars. With these statistics in mind, he quoted Strive Masiyiwa, "*Africa holds the key for humanity's future and agriculture holds the key for Africa's future.*"⁶

Dr. Mugasi emphasized the need to transform agriculture like the Green Revolution which improved food production in Latin America and Asia. The key question to ponder according to Mugasi was: why Africa was left behind? Dr. Mugasi suggested that there were three answers to that question: 1) African cropping systems were more diversified, 2) there was a lack of government support to agriculture both in terms of direct investments and supportive policies, and 3) the research on crops dominant in Africa like cassava, sorghum and millet lags behind research on rice, wheat and maize which are dominant in other parts of the world.

⁶ Strive Masiyiwa: Agriculture in Africa: Africa Progress Report 2014.

Dr. Mugasi gave background to NAADS with a discussion of the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) of which NAADS is just one aspect. The PMA was based on a multi-dimensional approach to poverty eradication and its implementation was hinged on these pillars:

- Agricultural Research and Technology Development,
- Delivery of Agricultural Advisory services,
- Rural Financial services,
- Promotion of Agricultural Marketing and processing,
- Agricultural Education, Sustainable Natural Resource Management
- Use and Development of Supportive Infrastructure.

He stated that this was a solid plan which created a good foundation to transform agriculture in the country. In 2001 NAADS was created to implement the second pillar of the PMA; delivery of agricultural extension services. NAADS was intended

to lead to fundamental change; shifting the idea of farmers from beneficiaries to users and enabling them to play a bigger role in controlling what had become corruption ridden extension services. However, the NAADS Programme did not take off as planned and failed due to a number of reasons. Dr. Mugasi mentioned five reasons in particular: 1) NAADS rolled out too fast to cover the whole country, 2) other pillars of PMA did not take off, 3) there was a shift in emphasis to inputs at the expense of extension services, 4) the advisory services alienated the poor, and 5) governance challenges relating to procurement were never addressed.

The future of NAADS, he stressed, is not all gloom and doom. He explained that the government is implementing reforms in the agricultural extension system through a new single spine system. The NAADS staff members in local governments were laid off pending a new recruitment system under the single spine. The NAADS Act will be amended to accommodate the new mandate of NAADS, which will focus on the management of agricultural input distribution chains, strategic interventions to promote priority commodities and supporting value chain developments that focus on the upper end of commodity chains.

Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) is a presidential initiative aimed at improving the livelihoods of the rural farmers being implemented by the Ministry of

Agriculture in collaboration with the UPDF. Dr. Mugasi emphasized that the UPDF should not be seen in a negative light and their involvement should not be a cause of concern. Rather, OWC utilises the relevant skill sets of UPDF staff including: trained veterinary doctors, agronomists and entomologists, and others. The UPDF structure under OWC has three levels: national, regional and constituency. The national and zonal levels have the overall oversight function of the OWC in terms of planning, execution and supervision, while at the constituency level, the OWC officers work in close collaboration with the district local governments.

Dr Mugasi concluded his presentation with a few recommendations that would enable NAADS to transform wealth creation in agriculture. These include the need for an increase in agricultural funding; the strengthening of agricultural research; an improvement in extension, disease and pest control; the reinforcing of value chains with emphasis on value addition; and the need for standards, quality monitoring and certification to connect with and benefit from global markets.

Discussant: Morrison Rwakakamba, Executive Director, Agency for Transformation



Figure 4: Morrison Rwakakamba presenting at the session

Mr. Rwakakamba discussed the two presentations by Prof. Bernard Bashaasha and Dr. Samuel Mugasi. He began his presentation by agreeing with Prof. Bashaasha that food security should be looked at through the lens of national security. Food security in effect means comprehensive peace and security for any nation.

The involvement of the army in agriculture extension

and advisory is problematic because agriculture is a science, and he disagreed with the practicality of training of army officers for three weeks and expecting them to be knowledgeable on agriculture advisory services. He suggested that UPDF should be trained for minimum of 10 years on agriculture related issues like agronomy and animal husbandry to be able to give scientific advice to farmers.

The involvement of UPDF within the NAADS programme comes as a result of fault lines inherent in the extension system. Prior to NAADS, agricultural output was 7.9% and, following the 2001 NAADS act, output declined to 1.3% despite more resources being allocated for agricultural services. He further noted that as NAADS became demand-driven, farmers became clients as opposed to beneficiaries of a government system. He said that the privatisation of government services created a focus on potential for profit with a reliance on supermarkets to deliver food security over the delivery of services.

Mr. Rwakakamba argued that aligning agriculture and security is not new in Uganda; prisons and prisoners manage land while the police also engage in agriculture. For the UPDF, their input into NAADS is impractical

unless extensive training and a longer timeframe of involvement is pursued; the short course in agriculture undergone by UPDF staff is insufficient. Regarding the role of UPDF in OWC, it was clarified that the UPDF focuses on logistics, such as distributing seeds, and not on advising planting and technical agricultural elements. Mr Rwakakamba commented that the UPDF are well equipped to move equipment regardless of budgetary constraints, unlike a comparably bureaucratic NAADS.

Responding to Dr. Mugasi's presentation on underfunding in the agriculture sector, he

suggested that resources should be spent more effectively on addressing broader governance issues. The NAADS programme has received increased amounts of money without demonstrating a positive correlation to an improvement in agricultural output and efficiency. He observed that 60% of the money allocated to the NAADS programme was spent on salaries while only 40% reached farmers. He pointed out that the 2008 Auditor General's report confirmed that only 37.1% of the money was usefully spent. In respect to finding of the sector, he advised that demanding

for 10% of the national budget for the agricultural sector is fair. However, given the importance of the agriculture sector in Uganda, the smaller allocations to the sector should be used efficiently and issues of governance should be addressed.

Mr. Rwakakamba concluded by advocating for a comprehensive and innovative extension system model to reach out to over five thousand households involved in Agriculture. He proposed the use of digital extension services such as radios to advise farmers on agricultural matters.

D. CONCLUSION

By and large the discussions provided deep insights into the policy shift in the implementation of NAADS. From the discussions, it became evident that the involvement of UPDF in the implementation of NAADS and other changes still remain a grey area for most Ugandans. Consequently it is important that NAADS Secretariat, Makerere University (CAES) and other stakeholders to conduct countrywide stakeholder meeting to sensitize the population on how to take advantage of the new changes.

E. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Increase awareness about the proposed changes to the NAADS programme:** Following the decision by government to reform the NAADS model, Ugandan citizens are ignorant of the new developments in the Agriculture sector. Consequently the Ministry of Agriculture and NAADS Secretariat should embark on a country wide awareness drive to educate the population about the new NAADS programme.
- **Address governance issues in the agricultural sector:** Broader governance issues like weak institutions, poor leadership, corruption and misuse of funds in the agricultural sector require urgent attention, and need to be addressed because they have a direct impact on the effectiveness of agricultural programmes.
- **Promote Partnerships for Knowledge Application to the Agricultural Sector:** The partnership between the UPDF, CAES and MAAIF was recognised as positive. It was recommended that formal partnerships, based on the application of research and knowledge should be further pursued. Universities and think-tanks have a lot to offer in the effective application of knowledge. For example CAES has started a food technology and business centre which promotes value addition and encourages Ugandans to reduce reliance on imported food.
- **Increase Funding to the Agriculture sector:** The agriculture sector is the backbone of the

economy and receives one of the smallest budget allocations approximately 3% annually. Participants pointed out that the corruption and misuse of funds in the agriculture sector has led to underachievement and absence of value for money. Therefore funds allocated to the agriculture sector should be used in a transparent and effective manner to transform the sector.