



Uganda at work Newsletter

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FAO launches new projects to improve climate change adaptation, food security and livelihoods in Uganda



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Message from FAO Representative

Dear Reader,

Greetings from FAO Representation in Uganda!

I welcome you to this issue of our newsletter in which we share updates on some of our work in Uganda. This year, We marked 40 years of partnership with the Government of Uganda and continue the commitment to support Uganda achieve food security for all citizens.

Over the last couple of months, we have launched new initiatives and projects aimed at improving livelihoods, building resilience to shocks and impacts of climate change, improving food and nutrition security and supporting basic social services in different parts of the country.

Together with the Government of Uganda, through the Ministries of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Water and Environment, Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, a new five-year programme for Karamoja and West Nile, was launched. The project, “Climate Resilient Livelihood Opportunities for Women Economic Empowerment” (CRWEE) is funded by the Government of Sweden and will strengthen gender-responsive and climate change resilience of rural women, who depend on agricultural production systems.

In this issue, read about highlights of the launch of the second phase of the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA+): Scaling up agriculture adaptation to climate change in Uganda project, with generous funding from the European Union. Also read about FAO’s transformational work through provision of water for production and promoting climate change adaptation among farmers.

I thank the Government of Uganda and partners for the good relations with FAO and we commit to working together for a #ZeroHunger Uganda.

Happy Reading

Antonio Querido

GCCA+ Project to upscale climate interventions

FAO, together with the Government of Uganda and the European Union (EU) in Uganda, launched the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) project to empower rural communities in most vulnerable districts, to identify and adapt to climate change, through interventions that promote food security, income generation and sustainable livelihoods. GCCA+, now in its second phase (2018 – 2023) and with funding of Euro8 million (Ugx 33.8 billion) from the EU, will scale up agricultural adaptation to climate change in Uganda, enabling rural households to become more resilient to climate change effects and food insecurity by promoting sustainable and gender transformation actions.

It will be implemented the central part of Uganda's Cattle Corridor, including six previous beneficiary districts: Nakasongola, Luwero, Nakaseke, Mubende, Kiboga and Sembabule; three new adjacent, vulnerable districts of Kalungu, Gomba, Lyantonde.



L-R Hon Bumulangaki Ssempiija, Minister for Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, (C) European Union Ambassador to Uganda H.E. Attilio Pacifici and FAO Rep in Uganda Dr Antonio Querido visit one of the exhibition stalls during the project launch in Kalungu District.

Phase I (2012 - 2017), witnessed milestones such as construction of 15 valley tanks and rehabilitation of five old ones, formation of 168 Farmer Field Schools, with about 4 000 farmer households, establishment of about 700 hectares of bioenergy plantations to enhance sustainable energy production, formation of 400 farmer groups with over 10 000 farmer households and establishment of 380 plots to demonstrate and promote field adaptation practices for coffee. This helped to make Uganda one of the leading countries in Africa undertaking climate change adaptation. Uganda remains one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change especially in the areas like the cattle corridor that is characterized by erratic rains, flooding, frequent and prolonged droughts, with communities dependent on rain-fed crop and livestock production systems. GCCA+ will see establishment of six valley tanks for about 12 000 livestock, distribution of 5 000 energy saving cook stoves and installation of 300 small scale irrigation schemes benefiting 25 000 people, among many other climate change adaptation interventions.



L-R FAO Country Representative Dr Antonio Querido, together with the Head of Development Cooperation at the Swedish Embassy in Uganda, Mr Ola Hallgren, at the launch of the Project in Arua District

New FAO Project to empower women in West Nile and Karamoja

With funding from the Government of Sweden, through the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) in Uganda, FAO and the Government of Uganda launched a five-year project aimed at economic empowerment of women and contributing to the eradication of poverty in Karamoja and West Nile Regions of Uganda. The project, "Climate Resilient Livelihood Opportunities for Women Economic Empowerment (CRWEE) in Karamoja and West Nile Regions of Uganda will strengthen gender responsive and climate change resilience of rural women populations which depend on agricultural production systems. Six out of every ten beneficiaries will be women and girls. Additional 6 000 households will benefit from ecosystem management interventions such as tree planting, while at least 180 government officials from national and district levels, will receive training to empower them for gender-transformative climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Present at the launch in April, were: Honourable Grace Freedom Kwiycwinyi- Minister of State for Northern Uganda, Ola Hällgren- Head of Development Cooperation at the Swedish Embassy in Kampala, Antonio Querido- FAO Representative in Uganda, religious and cultural leaders. Cultural leaders from the region, including His Royal Highness Drani Stephen of the Madi people and His Royal Majesty Ubim Phillip of Alur Kingdom pledged, in a public declaration, to support women's access to more economic opportunities, mobilize communities and stakeholders to increase women's access to productive resources and markets and ensure that women have greater access to and control of productive resources such as land.

West Nile and Karamoja sub-regions of Uganda have peculiar challenges to rural development and poverty reduction, compounded by the refugee influx in West Nile and recurrent droughts and floods in Karamoja, make it hard for many households to sustain agriculture-based livelihoods.

Rural fishing communities in Masaka and Kalungu districts boosted

Women and youths groups in rural poor fishing communities in Kalangala, Kalungu and Masaka districts got a boost to their income through a newly launched project titled: Integrated Livelihood Support to Fishing Communities around Lake Victoria. Launched by FAO and Uganda’s Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, the project, will empower beneficiaries to diversify their income sources in fishing and fishing-related activities; while at the same time receive training and inputs for economically viable and sustainable interventions such as aquaculture and value addition for capture fisheries.

The two-year project comes on the heels of MAAIF’s recognition of the enormous challenges affecting fishing dependent communities, especially women and youth. These groups remain marginalized, poor and with limited sustainable sources of income, because of overfishing, decline in fish stocks, illegal fishing, poor fish handling facilities and increased post-harvest losses. The project will support interventions aimed at promoting legal fishing methods and gears to vulnerable groups, providing non-fishing livelihood options, efficient post-harvest handling and value addition technologies, economic empowerment of women and youth through savings cooperatives, as well as building the capacity of the beneficiaries to sustain the benefits.

The fisheries sub-sector contributes about 12 and three percent to Uganda’s agricultural and national incomes respectively, demonstrating its huge potential to provide employment, income and food security. Overall, the sub-sector contributes to the livelihood of nearly 5.3 million people while about one million people are engaged in capture fisheries and about half a million people are engaged in aquaculture. Fish industrial processing employs about 5 000 people. Furthermore, fish forms an important part of diets, being a major source of critically required animal protein for about one million Ugandans. Through this intervention therefore, FAO and MAAIF will champion responsible and sustainable fishing while creating opportunities for women and youth in fishing communities to diversity incomes from fish-related activities.



FAO celebrates International Day of Forests with Secondary Schools’ Quiz



Students of Busoga College Mwiri together with their teacher planting a tree at Wanyange Girls Sec School after the IDF Secondary School’s Challenge.

To mark this year’s International Day of Forests and celebrate the theme: “Forests and Education”, FAO, through the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme (SPGS)

Phase III Project, organized a quiz code-named- #IDF Secondary Schools’ Challenge. The Quiz contest attracted six schools from Eastern Uganda, namely: Kiira College Butiki, Busoga College Mwiri, PMM Girls School, MM College Wairaka, Jinja College and the hosts, Wanyange Girls’ School. Students from the six schools were quizzed on a series of aspects such as forestry and trees, and the Sustainable Development Goals. The celebrations were also an opportunity for students to present poems, songs and drama on the dangers of deforestation on the environment and the benefits of planting trees, protecting and conserving forests.

The IDF Secondary Schools’ Challenge was won by Busoga College, Mwiri, followed by PMM Girls’ School.

FAO Representative in Uganda- Antonio Querido, urged schools to encourage and support young generations to love forests and to take care of trees to improve the environment for posterity.

FAO, through SPGS III, is supporting institutions such as schools to plant more trees by providing them with seedlings and technical assistance in tree planting. The Project targets establishment of 2 500 hectares (ha) of woodlots by 2021.





Ms Bwato Joyce, a member of Robijame group in Palorinya East, Moyo District displays some of their vegetable harvest

Vegetable farmers reaping big at FAO's micro-irrigation unit in Palorinya refugee settlement, Moyo District

Palorinya East village, in Itula Sub-county, Moyo District, far North of Uganda is known mostly for hosting South Sudanese refugees who fled fighting in their home country. Moyo District, home to some 310 600, more than 50 percent of whom are refugees, is located in North-Western part of Uganda, bordering South Sudan. Majority of the population here practice subsistence farming as the biggest source of livelihoods.

Moyo district, like all other refugee-hosting districts, is vulnerable to food insecurity, exacerbated by the impacts of climate change, especially prolonged dry spells. Over the years, rains have reduced and become unreliable, making it difficult for the farmers to predict when to plant their crops.

During the dry season, some of the farmers move to the banks of River Nile where they plant 'off-season' crops, mainly vegetables, a practice they have done over the years, except that in 2018, the dry spell was much longer than the usual leaving farmers worried of their next move given that the river banks were not spayed. "We have not seen rain since October of last year. We are in June but there is no sign of rain yet," says Anthony Drale, Coordinator of Robijame Farmers Group.

Formed in 2017 to grow off-season onions and tomatoes, the members of Rubijame farmer group would draw water from the nearby Nile River to water their crops.

In 2018, FAO, in partnership with Community Empowerment for Rural Development (CEFORD), identified Robijame Farmers Group based on the effort that they were already demonstrating to become a model farmers group as part of the "Strengthening the resilience of refugee and host-community livelihood systems" project funded by the Government of Japan. The group benefited according to the Government of Uganda's 70/30 approach, whereby refugee-hosting communities should benefit from a minimum of 30 percent of support through the refugee response.

The group which started with 15 members has since grown to 55 members, 34 of whom are women. Benjamin Afekuru, 32, a member of Robijame group in Palorinya East, Moyo District says that growing vegetables has for many years because of the constant droughts and short rain period. 'The highest profits I ever got from my 1.5-acre field was UGX 1,200,000 and that was way back in 2014 when the rain was a little reliable', he says.

However, for him and many other farmers, this changed when in 2018, FAO constructed a solar-powered micro-irrigation unit, attached to a 4-acre demonstration garden to support all year crop production. Launched earlier this year, the scheme is managed by Rubijame Farmers Group under the leadership of the Chairman with a committee of other eight individuals.

'Last season alone, I was able to get UGX 9million in total as proceeds from the cabbage garden that I established along with the irrigation scheme and from our FFS group', Benjamin confirmed. 'I plan to open a retail shop for my wife, get better schools for my five children and buy quality seeds for the next planting round', he added.

More water, more food and income

The irrigation system was constructed to allow vegetable farmers to access water for their fields, ensuring vegetable production throughout the year and better manage the worsening food and nutrition security situation in the region exacerbated by drought and refugee influx. 'The rains in Palorinya are short and unreliable. The soil is fertile but it dries very faster, even with just two sunny days', Anthony Drale, the group Coordinator explains. As part of the support from FAO, members of the were trained in good agronomic practices and provided with high quality and high yielding vegetable seed including cabbages, onions, tomatoes, eggplants among others.

"We have had 2 planting rounds since March 2019 so far, and made UGX 35Million and UGX 45million in the first and second planting round respectively, from selling cabbage and eggplants' Lou Abraham, the group chairman said.

'We no longer wait for the rains to plant because of this irrigation scheme. The traders like coming to our garden because they know they will get cabbage in any desired quantities. Our income has improved because, during the dry season, we sell vegetables at a higher price', "he added.

The group used the profits to buy inputs for the next planting round, saved some in their VSLA, and shared the rest amongst themselves. They plan to buy water pipes, and also open more land around the irrigation scheme. The solar micro-irrigation system is one of five such systems that FAO has provided for refugees and host communities in the refugee-hosting districts, aimed at boosting their incomes through all year vegetable production.



Mr Abraham Lou, the Chairperson of Robijame group in Palorinya East, Moyo District tending to the group garden of cabbages. The group has so far earned shs70 million shs from sale the sale of vegetables.

'I owe my University degree to FAO's small scale irrigation system,' Abel Kato

Abel Kato, 25, recently graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences from Makerere University, a dream he thought was far-fetched since he nearly dropped out of school in his first year for lack of tuition.

Abel's father, Fred Ssali, resident in Rwampanga Sub-county in Nakasongola District, has been struggling, with no stable source of income to educate six of his 13 children who are still in school. His earnings, mainly from the sale of agricultural produce from their small farm which he and his wife have tilled for years, but with little returns.

Nakasongola District lies in the Central Cattle Corridor in the Central part of Uganda which is largely affected by Climate Change, with prolonged dry spells affecting farmers and pastoralists in the area. While Rwampanga Sub-County borders L. Kyoga, the villages surrounding the lake have not been spared by the impacts of climate change. Fred and his family too!

"I used to rear animals for milk income. But many of my cows died due to lack of pastures and long droughts. I resorted to growing vegetables during the short rainy season," he says. However, vegetable growing during the rainy season, he says, could not bring him enough income to support his family.



Abel Kato, a fresh graduate helping his father harvest tomatoes from the family garden in Nakasongola District.

His situation would change for better when in 2015, he was selected and agreed to host a demonstration site for climate change adaptation, as part of a Global Climate Change Project; Agriculture Adaptation to Climate Change Project, an FAO project funded by the European Union and the Government of Belgium, implemented between

2013-2017. At this demonstration site, a micro-irrigation system with a 20,000 litres, solar water pump, a gravity-flow pipeline from Lake Kyoga to water abstraction point where a submersible solar water pump is installed. The water is raised to the overhead tank, from where it flows to the drip irrigation system installed on a four-acre piece of land.

Nearly three years after the project which was implemented in six districts in the cattle corridor closed, the beneficiaries are still reaping from its successes. Fred and his son Abel are still enjoying benefits of the project, which they testify has changed their lives in many ways than they could have ever imagined.

"I was worried that I would drop out of school after the first semester because my father did not have all the money I needed for tuition, in addition to my sisters' school fees. I started laying bricks to raise my tuition but the earnings were too small to cover even a half," Abel recounts.

This would change during the first Semester holiday after her father was selected to host a demonstration irrigation system. As a family, they planted assorted vegetables on a four-acre piece of land as soon as they got water in the demo garden.

By the end of the season, Fred had paid school fees for his five children and remained with a balance of about UGC 7million, part of which he used to roof his house with iron sheets.

"We are grateful to FAO for this life-saving system. We have never earned as much money as we do since we got the system," says Fred, adding that he gets more money during the dry season because prices for vegetables are high and more stable during offseason," Fred explains.

Today, two of Fred's children have graduated from University, one as a banker and is employed, and Abel, as a social worker who is devoting his time the family farm which he dreams to transform in a few years to come.

Under the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) project, over 21 water facilities and about 15 small-scale solar-powered irrigation systems were constructed in the central cattle corridor districts of Luwero, Nakaseke, Nakasongola, Kiboga, Mubende, and Sembabule.





How FAO water facilities are transforming lives in Uganda's central cattle corridor districts

Charles Tibaijuka is a cattle keeper in Lukaya sub-county, Mubende district in Uganda. Cattle keeping is hereditary in his family line, and in the whole community. In fact, the majority of the population in the district are known as 'baralo,' a common phrase to describe cattle keepers in the central cattle corridor part of the country.

The 45-year-old started grazing cattle as a child even when he went to school. At 18, he established his own herd of 15 animals. Over time, his herd grew to over 100 local breeds of cattle and 30 improved breeds. In 2016, severe drought hit his area that made almost the entire village move and settles in another district, about 70 kilometres away. All of these movements for the sole purpose of searching for water and pastures for their animals.

"The drought lasted close to four months. Our cows started dying one by one, mostly due to lack of water and pastures to graze from. The animals picked diseases along the journey in search of water and at few available water points," he narrates. His herd was attacked by ticks and other tick-borne diseases and he lost 12 cows.

By the time he returned home after three months, he had less than 31 cows less, a loss he is yet to recover from. His neighbour and employee, George Bashana lost 20 cows out his 30 cows. To date, he has only managed to add ten cows and hopes that by the end of 2019, he will have an additional ten cows, making it 20.

"My cows died. Now I work for other people to replace the ones I lost. I have planted new pastures given to us by FAO because I have noticed they withstand drought and they increase milk production," says George, adding that he is able to get more milk in his five cows, three times more than what he used to get in his 20 cows.

For Teba, as he is popularly known in his village, George and their neighbours, the 2016 drought was not the last one they have experienced but it would be the last time they had to move away from their homes in search of water and pastures because of the efforts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Uganda. Together with the Ministry of Water and Environment, FAO provided them with a ten million litre valley dam. Construction of the dam was completed in November 2016 and subsequently commissioned months after it was filled with water, at the onset of rains.

"Our situation has never been the same. We are grateful to FAO and the government of Uganda for this valley dam. Because of it, we do not have to move from here anymore. Our animals have a constant water supply and pastures, milk production has increased, and we are healthier," Teba explains.

In the last three years since the valley dam was constructed, Lukaya Tukwatanise group, emerging from a small group of 30 farmer field school members, now boasts of 60 household association of both men and women. Everyone engages in various economic activities including horticulture, bull fattening, milk and ghee production, savings and loan association, pasture growing, among others, with share capital of up shs60 million.

According to Stephen Muganda, also a member of the group, there has been a tremendous reduction in livestock diseases especially ticks and tickborne diseases, which had become a huge challenge for the community.

"We were trained in disease control and prevention. All our members have put in place measures of disease prevention in their farms. Occasionally, we have seen animals with ticks but these only come during the dry season when we get an uncontrolled number of animals from outside this community being brought to drink water."

He further explains that his milk production has increased from 20 litres per day to 50 litres, from the same number of cows being milked. "The cows look healthy. We look healthy too. We do not move long distances anymore, and we have time to do other things, and our children are going to school," Stephen asserts.

During the dry season, the dam serves up to 2,000 heads of cattle per day, including 650 cows owned by members of Lukaya Tukwatanise Group. The dam is not only used for watering animals but also a binding factor for the members.

Each member of the association saves shs 17,000 (about 4 dollars) a year as a mandatory fee for dam maintenance, giving just over a million shs, besides their monthly savings of 25,000 shillings. The members lend money amongst themselves. Interest generated from the loans is used to meet the day-to-day activities of running and maintaining the dam, including monthly salary for the security guard, repairs and bush clearing.

"Recently, one of the pipes that take water to the troughs for animals and the taps for domestic use had a problem and needed to be replaced. Through our fund, we were able to buy a new pipe and engaged a professional to replace the faulty one within the shortest period possible," Teeba explains, saying that, it would have taken them not more than three months to fix such a small leakage, had they relied on the district's teams to respond.



One of the valley dams constructed under FAO's Global Climate Change project funded by the European Union, in Mubende District

It is for households like those of Teba, Stephen, George and many others that FAO is providing support to communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change in Uganda through its climate change programmes. In its mandate to support the Government of Uganda to promote food and income security of the people, especially those living in rural areas, FAO has since 2013, implemented various projects that aim at improving crop and livestock production through increased access to water for agricultural production. Specifically, under the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) project, over 21 water facilities and about 15 small-scale solar-powered irrigation systems constructed in 2016-17, in the central cattle corridor districts of Luwero, Nakaseke, Nakasongola, Kiboga, Mubende, and Sembabule. Lukaya Tukwatanise Group Dam is one of them. Rural communities utilize these facilities as key sources of water for livestock, crop production, and domestic use, during the dry season. These water resources are playing a fundamental role in enhancing food and income security for the rural populations, through the provision of safe and clean water production.

News Highlights:

FAO trains District veterinary officers on outbreak investigations and reporting

Some forty-five District Surveillance Focal Persons (DSFPs) and other animal health practitioners have been trained to systematically investigate and exchange animal disease information, key actions required by decision makers. The move aims to coordinate surveillance efforts at the national and sub-national level to enhance preparedness and rapid response to outbreaks.

Government, FAO, WFP make strides in development of a comprehensive plan to reduce post-harvest losses

The new National Strategy for Post-harvest Loss Reduction in Grains aims to support government of Uganda address high food losses resulting from poor post-harvest handling practices such as poor drying and high moisture content, inadequate and inappropriate storage facilities, limited value-addition, contamination, poor marketing systems, damage by insects, rodents and other pests and infestation by micro-organisms especially fungus that leads to aflatoxin.



National Celebrations will be held at Bulindi Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute, Hoima District.

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