

FARM POWER YOUTH CONFERENCE

30TH AUGUST 2012 AT

HOTEL TRIANGLE, KAMPALA



A REPORT BY

HUNGER FIGHTERS UGANDA

(HF-UG)

Prepared By

Namukasa Christine

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FOTU and FRA.**

Table of Contents

Background	3
Welcome and opening remarks	3
Youth Presentation	4
Threats to involvement of youth in agriculture	5
Way forward.....	6
Member of Parliament speech	7
Way forward.....	8
Discussions and questions	8
Recommendation.....	9
Participants Deliberations.....	11
Group Work	13
Guiding questions.....	13
Presentations.....	14
Priority issues for consideration.....	14
How youth can motivate each other	15
Ideas about the youth forum.....	16
Resolutions adopted by the Farm Power Youth Conference.....	16
Speech by Guest of Honor.....	19
Launch of Youth in Agriculture Forum (YiAF)	20

Background

Agriculture sector is known as the backbone of Uganda as it is currently a source of livelihood to majority of Ugandans and greatly contributes to the countries development. Despite its importance to the economy, the sector faces a myriad of challenges; Uganda's agriculture remains largely traditional, it is dominated by small holder subsistence farmers, the level of investment is insufficient to make meaningful contribution in the livelihood of farmers and more importantly it is unattractive to the youth. The Agriculture sector is one of those sectors that carries the potential to help the youth but which they have unfortunately shunned and ignored as a result of various reasons. In this regard, the Farm Power Youth Conference was organized under the theme of "*Exploiting the power of the youth to revamp the agricultural sector*" so as to provide one of such timely opportunity for the youth to engage in deliberation on the possible way forward to realize their stake in the Uganda's number one opportunity sector.

Funded by Action Aid, organized by Food Rights Alliance, Hunger Fighters Uganda and Food Talk Uganda, the conference was held at Hotel Triangle's Crane Hall on 30th August, 2012. It was attended by over 126 youth from all regions of the country some of whom represented various CBOs, CSOs and legislators. Below is what transpired.

Welcome and opening remarks

Ms. Agnes Kirabo (Communication and Advocacy Manager –VEDCO and Coordinator for FRA) welcomed all the participants of the Farm Power Youth Conference and appreciated them for honouring the day. She noted that as the preparations for the Jubilee celebration were going on, agriculture had been dropped off the agenda. "The celebrations must not only just be about wining and dancing but should focus on appreciating the past and redesigning strategies for a better future," She said. She further wondered that it was unfortunate for Ugandans not to have learnt from past experiences such as the food prices escalating last year and the subsequent strikes. She said that it was unrealistic for the celebrations to shy away from agricultural issues despite the fact that the food security for Uganda can be guaranteed through agriculture. The national farmers' forum was first organized in 2011 in order for farmers to air out their views. This helped in calming down the frequent strikes by then which were in some way linked to issues of food.

Ms. Agnes added that the youth are a critical segment of society since according to demographics they are the majority and are expected to be at the peak of learning. She pointed out that the Youth forum was decisive given people's perception about youth and agriculture. It is often said that the youth have shunned agriculture and sold off parents' land to buy motorcycles well known as boda-boda. "One old female farmer in one of the Farmers' Fora raised an outcry about the fact that youth are at a critical age of eating a lot of food which they have not paid for nor produced hence putting a big burden on the food basket in the nation," She narrated. She further emphasized that the situation is compounded by the aspect of parents taking their children to schools where they have picked theories and no skills and the consequences are youth who have not been empowered to appreciate benefits of agriculture.

Ms. Agnes thanked Hunger Fighters Uganda, Activista and Food Talk Uganda for the efforts of putting together the workshop and urged them to focus on the Youth in Agriculture Forum to deliver good results. She also urged the youth to come up with critical and practical avenues where youth can have an impact and consequently influence policies and the youth fund. She finally wished the youth fruitful deliberations and expressed gratitude to the partners of FRA for their contribution.

Youth Presentation

Exploiting the power of the youth to revamp the agriculture sector; Whose duty? Whose responsibility?

Mr. Aturinde Emmanuel (Executive Director for Hunger Fighters Uganda) presented a paper that cited a combination of responses from some youth in Uganda as regards Agriculture. He reported that globally one billion people are food insecure while 1/7 go to bed hungry. Further more, he added that 83% youth in Uganda are unemployed. With regard to Agriculture, Mr. Aturinde noted that the third stanza of the national anthem highlights its importance to the nation. He said that in the past, when the agriculture sector was dominated by marketing boards and cooperatives, extension Services were efficient and the sector grew between 4-6% annually and that this was affected by political turmoil in the 70s and 80s. Poverty reduced from 44% in 1993 to 31% in 2006 and 24.5% in 2012 (MoFPED 2012).

Mr. Aturinde unveiled relevant facts as follows:

- Statistics reveal that agriculture employs 73% of the Uganda's population contributes to 20% GDP and accounts for 48% of exports and is the leading provider of raw materials.
- Since the recovery period started Uganda has adopted a number of policies e.g. SAPS in 1980s to 1990s, MDGs in 2000, PEAP 1997 & the associated policies, PMA, NDP, DSIP in 2010 and the CAAP . These policies are however marred by weaknesses highlighted here below;
 - i. They are less participatory especially for the youth
 - ii. There insufficient definition to the policy problems and the approach is private sector led growth through income generation. Policies remain general without clear objectives, not based on correct data among others.
 - iii. Policies are decorated with terminologies like Government will encourage, Government will support, Government will promote, without the specifics as to how, how much and when this will be done

Mr. Aturinde revealed that an analysis of youth involvement in Agriculture in Uganda reveals that they have great potential to transform the sector. The youth contribution can be traced in all sectors even in the agriculture sector but there is limited documentation of youth contribution. Some of the challenges to youth involvement in Agriculture include;

- Limited or no appropriate agronomical and entrepreneurial skills.

- The usual “on-farm” challenges such as poor market access challenges, pests and diseases, inadequate inputs.
- Climate change effects which are manifested through long drought and unreliable rainfall.
- Limited access to land, and lack of startup capital among others.
- Infrastructural deficiencies to facilitate the mobility of the factors of production and the produce to the market and processing centers, among others
- Limited control of input into their roles, responsibilities and functions.
- The use of rudimentary tools such as hoes that demoralize the youth
- Youth are negatively influenced by the image created around agricultural pursuits as a means of livelihood.

He emphasised that the involvement of the youth in Agriculture will improve their poor image about Agriculture, increase employment particularly for youth, reduce crime and social problems and promote food security.

Threats to involvement of youth in agriculture

Mr. Aturinde further discussed that a section of the youth is associated with deviant behavior (Crime and violence, drugs abuse). “The ‘get money quickly and drive quickly’ has become the order of the day,” he wondered. He also noted that risky sexual behavior and their negative consequences (STD’s, HIV-AIDS, and teenage pregnancies) have robbed the agriculture sector of potential labor and innovation that the country needs to spur development. Attitude and mentality has swayed the youth to believing that there are better opportunities outside the agricultural sector, teenage pregnancies and failure of many youth to complete the primary education cycle (National completion rate estimated at an average 50%), limited or lack of motivation and the feelings of despair (UNDP (2010): Uganda MDG Report.), lack of education and necessary training in appropriate Agronomical and entrepreneurial practices, general poverty and unemployment is also affecting the inter-sectoral linkages and innovation.

He mentioned that some of the opportunities youth have included;

- The existing incentives and policies that the youth can target to tap into existing agriculture opportunities say funding for NAADS though limited.
- The vibrant and expanding market for primary and secondary agricultural commodities.
- Many tertiary training opportunities exist for young persons interested in agriculture. Sector.
- Encouraging association and exploiting of the windows of opportunity in the policy politics will save the youth.

- The farm power remains the main solution to the financial crisis beyond the interconnected financial system.
- The civil society is another vital avenue that can consolidate the voices of the youth in agriculture.

Mr. Aturinde pointed out that it is the duty of the state to engage the youth in the agriculture sector and that it is the responsibility of citizens (youth) to implement programmes designed by government. The youth can attract their fellow youth.

Way forward

- Need for strategic training and capacity development
- Increased and easier access to resources like land, capital, technology and information
- Develop and disseminate the national agric policy
- Increased financing to the sector
- Facilitating market opportunities
- Government to facilitate national Youth Award in agriculture focusing on innovation development.
- Improving the absorptive capacity of MAAIF of the budget resources
- The Role of the civil society.
- Increase research and documentation of realities about youth in the agric sector.
- The media needs to give attention to the youth in agric sector.

Member of Parliament's speech



Honorable Amoding Monica (National chairperson for parliamentary forum for youth affairs, National female youth MP and a member of the budget committee, legal and parliamentary committees) thanked the youth for organizing such a forum and she informed them that beyond being passionate about agriculture sector, she is a farmer as well with 50 acres of maize. She expresses gratitude to Mr. Emmanuel Aturinde for the important issues he highlighted during his presentation such as the comparative advantage of agriculture that Uganda has at the global scale.

Hon. Amoding said that Uganda cannot compete with advanced countries in manufacturing sector favorably so the sooner Uganda as a nation realizes this, the better it will be. She added that Uganda needs to exploit the comparative advantage in mining and tourism because it is gifted by nature in climate and

soils. She further noted that the country has however invested more in other sectors and left the agriculture sector to the old women in villages. “Most of the youth are shying away from agriculture and agricultural courses in universities are producing many graduates but very few are practicing agriculture”, She wondered. “Youth need to embrace agriculture as a business and as a paying sector that is critical for the success of the country”, she added. The MP advised the youth to engage in Agriculture so as to earn income for example through poultry projects and fruit cultivation which that require minimum resources yet with ready markets.

She emphasized that Government needs to consider the agriculture sector as one that can pay all the bills and hence take a pragmatic approach in changing this sector. She said that the market for food crops is so massive in Africa and should therefore be exploited. However in order for the Government to achieve all this, the sector has to get a minimum of 15% budgetary allocation. The parliament is trying to urge the government to prioritize the sector and she, as part of the budgeting committee also pledged to advocate for this. NAADS has a special youth project under NAADS headed by Mr. Geoffrey Kyobuguzi that youth should endeavor to benefit from.

The MP further reported that:

- The Government is also in the process of zoning the country according to the opportunities available. The Buganda region has been completed and viable opportunities have been identified while zoning for the rest of the regions it is ongoing.
- The Youth venture fund is another opportunity that the youth in Uganda should take advantage of. Parliament is working at establishing the fund to be sustainable and to

cater for both uneducated and educated as well as link youth farmers to markets. The attitudes and work ethics of the youth need to change in order for these efforts not to be in vain.

- The Government is also working on “skill in Uganda” that emphasizes the importance of skills among the youth. As country moves into the next fifty years, priorities should shift away from away from degrees and conventional education to youth exploiting opportunities in gardening and compound cleaning and designers, plumbers, athletics and agriculture.

Way forward

Hon. Amoding commended the youth for launching a youth in agriculture forum and she informed them of her desire to have such fora at the district level and she assured that the Government was to support the initiative. She further appealed to the youth to get a mindset shift from colonial thinking of only searching for white collar jobs which is causing the massive unemployment rates but instead become employers/ job creators.

She urged youth to support the establishment of the youth venture fund by petitioning against its being scrapped. Countries like Kenya have benefited immensely from it. She encouraged the youth should put government to the task on youth issues with a unified voice and desist from giving in to politicians who want to sue them for selfish gains.

Despite the fact that youth consist of 78% of the population in Uganda they are left out of many in the decision making processes. She therefore implored the youth to use the jubilee season to reflect and advocate for their issues take center stage.

She cautioned the youth about the dangers of rising statistics of the HIV/AIDS scourge, early marriages, teenage unwanted pregnancies and abortions. These factors have had a negative impact on the productivity of the youth. In conclusion, she expressed gratitude to the organizers of the forum for all their efforts and wished the participants peaceful deliberations.

Discussions and questions

Main Discussants were Ms. Ebanyat Pamela (World Vision- Resource person in agriculture and livelihoods) and Mr. James Kaija (Executive Director of Food Talk Uganda)

The Key outcome of this session was the resolutions on how the youth will revamp the agriculture sector. Below are the discussants’ submissions as they opened the discussion session.

Ms. Ebanyat Pamela

Ms. Ebanyat Pamela informed the participants that agriculture is a more natural way of living/ way of life and that innovation and attitude are key aspects that will shape the future of agriculture.



Ms. Ebanyat Pamela (right) and Mr. Kaija James conducting the discussion session from which the Youth in Agriculture Resolutions evolved

The Hiccups of Youth in Involvement in Agriculture

- The image of agriculture has been partly spoilt by the guardians and teachers/prisons who give agriculture as a form punishment.
- In war torn areas is arrangement of camps which posed a challenge to promotion of food security by world vision. In the camp was challenging due to the layout of the camps.
- Youth do not have access to land especially those born and bred in the cities.

Recommendation

- The school system should devise means of exposing their students to model farms. It is unfortunate that a large population youth have resorted to riding boda bodas. Teachers have also picked interest in the latter in a bid to supplement the low salaries they earn.
- With regard to responsibility and duty, parents/ guardians are the first line models for their children while schools should have agriculture clubs and farm visits.
- Non-Governmental Organizations should deliberately target youth groups.
- The government should avail funds for youth programs.
- Churches and mosques could help with attitude change.

Without agriculture there will be no food in the markets therefore there is need to look into the biggest gap hindering youth in engaging in agriculture.

Mr. Kaija James

Mr. Kaija said that the previous researches and presentations revealed that people in rural areas are poorer than those in urban areas. Most agriculture is practiced in the rural areas thus implying that agriculture is for the poor. This kind attitude biases the youth to look at agriculture as a slippery ground. However, this attitude could change if the silence about successful agriculturalists is broken. He highlighted the fact that youth are faced with the challenge of accessing credit because of lack collateral yet successful agricultural ventures require a lot of investment. The definition of a youth should also be harmonized and the aspect of youth accessing land should be addressed in order to enable youth to fully engage in agriculture while they are still in youthful stage.



Mr. Kaija James addressing the youth during the discussion session

As a way forward, incentives are key for the success of agriculture. E.g. Germany gives a lot of incentives. Uganda should also ensure provision of irrigation systems given the unreliable weather patterns. Youth should not be limited to agriculture as the use of a hoe but engage at any point along the value chain.

Participants Deliberations



Mr. Senyonyi Tadeo: Disagreed with the fact that youth do not have access to land. They can rent land around the Kampala outskirts. It was stated that youth want quick money; this can be got from agriculture for example from mushroom farming.

Mr. Senyonyi Tadeo presenting his submission

Ms. Ampaire Yvieta: Government should emphasize the role of parents modeling children's perceptions about agriculture and the perception of parent's about agriculture. The education system does not emphasize agriculture and parents can follow up on this during PTA (parent Teacher associations). Government should clarify sources of relevant information such as information about funds and markets.

Mr. Musoke Twahah: The major hiccups to involvement of youth in Agriculture are selective control of funds, limited media coverage on agriculture, older people competing with youth for agricultural opportunities e.g. In NAADS as well as parent's and youth's perception about agriculture.

Ms. Alemura Brenda: The policy formulation and implementation process does not favor involvement of youth in agriculture. Youth leaders should take a lead role.

Mr. Matovu Samuel: A report published in 2008 cited youth unemployment rates at 83%. The youth also lack innovation and should visit model farms to learn more and get motivated. Youth should also consider hiring land.

Responses from Main Discussants

Mr. Kaija informed the participants that land accessibility has physical and financial aspects. Land located at long distances from the person could have limitations in costs of supervision. He said that the youth have a tendency of replicating innovations yet an idea can turn into magic depending on what it rubs against.

Ms. Ebanyat expressed concern over the high rate of brain drain due to the high unemployment rates for youth. Youth also have to desist waiting for large capital sums but to make use of limited resources to create jobs. She appreciated the media for the pull outs on agriculture and she encouraged the youth to read them. “In order to earn quick money from agriculture, one should be strategic at planning e.g. In terms of engaging in crops with sustainable markets”, she advised.

More deliberations from participants

Mr. Ahmed Hadji: Foreign investors engaging in large scale agriculture should not be blamed because the Ugandans are reluctant and have left the land unused.

Ms. Namanya Gloria: Mass media has pull outs and programs that air out success stories of farmers e.g. NTV which can motivate youth to get involved in agriculture. Youth are future parents and should commit to nurturing their children to appreciate agriculture. The gender aspect where most girls are expected to farm while boys are left out should be addressed.

Mr. Chemutai Moses: Drawing from his experience in farming, climate change is a major challenge. Some farmers are ignorant of the right kind of crops for the region, seasons and soils. The Government should also diversify market outlets.

Mr. Okurut Omadi: In case the budgetary allocation gets increased, prioritization of what should be done in the sector is vital. Who is responsible for market information in the country? Youth are not taking the initiative to prioritize acquisition of resources when they get money. If the agricultural sector is to develop, the inter linkages with other sectors should not be undermined.

Farmer from Katakwi:



She is an example of successful youth engaged in farming. She has Cyprus trees, eight cows and poultry projects which had a humble beginning. After harvesting Cyprus and cassava she was able to buy a plot of land. Her poultry project now supplies produce to the whole district. The major challenge is getting feeds for chicken. She said that the support offered by government is not adequate because many of the beneficiaries do not have the skills of sustaining the projects they have started. Gender aspect is crucial at the grass roots as evidenced by parental neglect and marginalization of the girl child. The NAADS guidelines should be revised to be friendlier. Despite the fact the land is available in Katakwi, many youth are redundant, inputs and water harvesting knowledge is also minimal.

*A youth from Katakwi District testifying
About her success in Agriculture*

Mr. Imaniraguha Benjamin: The government should come up with a defined price setting that will motivate and attract the youth to engage in Agriculture. It should also put in place favorable land policies e.g. minimum land acreage.

Food processing skills should be provided especially to the youth because processed farm produce is more profitable. Most of the agriculture produce lose markets because they are produced spontaneously hence the need to exploit suitable regional markets. The public image of agriculture should be improved by desisting from using agriculture as a means of punishment.

Responses from the Main Discussants

Mr. Kaija James said the market problems result from the liberalized market structure hence middlemen are earning more than farmers. The existing policies on land are favoring non citizens to acquire land.

Ms. Ebanyat confirmed that market information is a challenge in communities; however NGOs and development workers are devising means to solve it. Some suggested avenues include; radios, boards in communities, sms, news papers and the general media though all these require funding.

Integrating sectors is essential because they are interrelated, for example the Health Sector. The government should also address cultural practices that are influencing family planning. Some citrus fruit farmers are being exploited by middlemen due to lack of bargaining power. This could be solved by building their capacity. Water harvesting is a big investment that government needs to work in collaboration with NGOs that can co-fund the initiative. This will help control flooding in areas like Teso region.

Mr. Aturinde Emmanuel: Is Budget Allocation the problem looking for solution or vice versa. European Union puts 42% of its budget into agriculture. If the solution is in increasing budget allocation, it may not be useful if there is no breakdown that targets youth. Successful stories of youth farmers shall be documented and will be used to influence youth to engage in farming.

Group Work

Participants were in this session organized in four groups to discuss and provide suitable answers to the following guiding questions.

Guiding questions

1. Suggest 5 priority oppressing issues if better worked upon will revamp youth involvement in agric and who is responsible
2. How can the youth motivate each other to get involved in the Agriculture sector?
3. Suggest outlook, operationalization and mechanisms of the Youth in Agriculture Forum?



Some of the youth discussing during the group work session from which group presentations where made

Presentations

Priority issues for consideration

- Re-adjustment of NAADS guidelines to favor youth involvement
- Subsidization of youth initiatives
- Guiding youth in identifying viable projects as well as building their capacity ,
- Linking active and potential youth farmers to relevant research particularly on markets
- Address the negative attitude imparted by parents and government as well as schools portraying agriculture as a means of punishment
- Education; Government should increase uptake of agriculture students at the university and ensure that agricultural education is emphasized right from primary schools and redesign curriculum to an exciting one
- Increase funding to youth
- Discourage donations and relief which tend to cause laziness e.g. in Karamoja they depend on relief and hence are complacent
- Land accessibility; Government should avail land to youth for agricultural purposes
- Link youth to successful youth forums and individuals at district level , cooperatives and associations which will enable them access funds and have a common voice(responsible; agriculture youth forum , youth MP and model farmers in districts)
- Policy formulation should cater for youth involvement (Youth MP, parliament)
- Parents should introduce their children to agriculture while still young and endeavor to make them appreciate its value. (Responsible; parents and guardians and youth who are future parents)

- Increase budgetary allocation to agriculture sector up to 15-20% and have more funds diverted to agriculture sector e.g. youth fund (Responsible; MPs, youth, youth MPs)
- Exposing youth to agriculture and providing the relevant information through visits to demonstration farms, availing them with live testimonies of successful farmers and mass media
- Help youth to get innovative and creative



Youth presenting their group deliberations

How youth can motivate each other

- Employable youth engaging in agriculture to attract others
- Make use of agriculture exhibitions, farm demonstrations, farm visits to successful youth farmers to generate ideas
- Awarding successful youth model farmers in order to attract other youth
- Publicizing successful youth farmers all over the media
- Encourage exchange programs within youth circles e.g. inter district exchanges to share experiences
- Encourage youth to engage at all points along the agriculture value chain
- NGOs provide volunteering opportunities for youth in order to tap their minds and potential
- Youth encouraged to take up leadership roles and opportunities in order to echo their voices and express concerns
- Mobilizing resources through youth partnership to access funds; e.g. at village levels, youth organize into groups to pool resources for investment
- Motivating and sensitizing the graduates go back to village to practice agriculture

- Using youth forums, production belts, cooperatives, mass media, MDD, demonstration farms to motivate youth

Ideas for the Youth in Agriculture forum

- Decentralization of the forum up to household level
- Membership to youth forum restricted to those engaging in agriculture; youth urged to join the forum
- Good mgt and structure and leadership of the youth for a right from national to smaller ones.
- Build capacity of leaders
- Look out for opportunities that will help youth
- Awarding outstanding youth
- Engaging youth in policy formulation and implementation
- Networking and fellowships
- Devise a strategic plan giving guidelines on how youth forum will be run
- Have a secretariat that is accessible by youth to express their concerns to
- Devise means of ensuring that information relevant to youth farmers can be accessed quickly even at the village level
- Use of form committees that can monitor allocation of funds to the sector especially for youth
- The forum should increase collaboration and networking thus linking youth even up to international levels
- Harmonization of policies that cultivate bureaucracies for funds allocated for development among the youth

Note; It was observed that within the line ministry (Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries) there is no advisory committee for the youth to guide them on investment in agriculture, available market, enhance level of competition and increase on their productivity .

Resolutions adopted by the Farm Power Youth Conference

The Farm Power Youth Conference 2012

Recalling the historical role of the Agriculture sector to Uganda's economy for the last 50 years, it is a known fact that the agriculture contributes 20% to Uganda's GDP. Agriculture has nurtured and shaped the past, current and the future of the majority of the girls and boys, women and men of this country. Over 73% of the Ugandan citizens are employed by the sector and accounts for 48% of exports leading provider of raw materials to industry and supports other sectors. The youth do recognize the government's effort through its policies to support the agriculture sector, it is worth noting that majority of the youth are increasingly shunning the agriculture sector, and that this has exposed them to be victims of unemployment, criminality, HIV/Aids and other antisocial behaviors.

The youth are expressing concern that limited youth participation in agriculture is hampered by inappropriate agronomical and entrepreneurial skills, poor technology, limited financing, investment research and innovation poor access to necessary agricultural information, other on farm challenges and skewed government policies that do not commit to develop the youth in agriculture. It is also worth noting that negative effects of the declining trends in agriculture in the past years including the hyper food prices since 2009, the youth are alarmed by the state of foods insecurity in country and hence recognize the need to reduce youth unemployment, contributing to food insecurity.

Referring to the role of the Government of Uganda, FRA and its members, the civil society in general, development partners, and the youth; Hereby therefore:

1. *Reaffirm* the need to exploit the potential of the youth to revamp the agriculture sector.
2. *Call upon* all stakeholders, - the state, the civil society and the youth to support to this effort.
3. *Recommend* the government to;
 - a) establish a comprehensive and holistic national-level agriculture policy with due consideration of the youth in agriculture.
 - b) prioritize the youth in agriculture efforts and re-adjust the NAADS guidelines to favor youth involvement in agriculture.
 - c) increase budgetary allocation to the agriculture sector up to 15-20%, and have more funds committed to agriculture sector through the Youth Venture Capital Fund.
 - d) guide youth in identifying viable projects as well as building their capacities by linking them to active and potential youth farmers; and providing the relevant information through on farm learning demonstrations and the mass media.
 - e) invest in relevant research particularly on markets and value chain improvement, agro-processing.
 - f) Set up the youth advisory committee in the line ministry with emphasis on attracting and retaining the youth in agriculture.
 - g) award of successful youth farmers to motivate and attract many youth to the sector.
 - h) to rejuvenates and supports the development of cooperatives and marketing boards.
 - i) address the negative attitude imparted by parents, and government prisons as well as schools portraying agriculture as a means of punishment.
4. *Recommend* Parents and guardians to;
 - a) introduce their children to agriculture while still young and endeavor to make them appreciate its value.
5. *Recommend* the Civil Society to;
 - a) remain supportive and intensify youth efforts to engage in agriculture;
6. *Encourage* the youth to;
 - a) take a proactive role to tap into the opportunities existing within this government policies and programmes.

- b) embrace the agriculture activities as an opportunity source of employment and to contribute to food security and national development.
7. *The youth decided* to establish a Youth in Agriculture Forum (YiAF) of the Food Rights Alliance consisting of youth agencies and individuals to spearhead the youth agenda in agriculture and to provide a constructive dialogue and interface between the youth, policy makers, policy implementers, civil society, the media, private sector, and to act as a youth social movement in agriculture,
- a) *Underlines* that the Youth in Agriculture Forum is to explore all available opportunities to promote youth engagement in agriculture for sustainable development in Uganda;
 - b) *Underlines further* that the YiAF will establish countrywide presence including the urban and rural youth, and continue influencing and attracting the youth to engage in agriculture;
 - c) *Notes* that YiAF explores avenues for establishing and strengthen the national youth in agriculture movement;
 - d) *Stresses* that YiAF explores possible policy advocacy issues and avenues for influencing the policy agenda to integrate the youth as an asset to agriculture development in Uganda;
 - e) *Requests* the YiAF to work to document the role of the youth in the agriculture sector to shape, define and redefine the youth agenda as part of the solutions to challenges confronting the youth in Uganda;
8. *Appeal* for support from the Civil society, government, development partners, and private sector to FRA and the YiAF in attracting the youth to farming and ensuring that they realise the goal of sustainable development.
9. *Decide* to remain actively seized of the matter.

Speech by Guest of Honor: Mr. Mondo Cheteka



Mr. Mondo Cheteka, Minister for Youth Affairs/Commissioner for youth and development issues under Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

Mr. Mondo informed the youth that he felt reassurance resulting from the initiative of the youth to launch an agricultural youth forum. “Over 70% of people in the nation are involved in agriculture sector and it is their source of income”, he said. He emphasized that the agriculture sector is not yet where it ought to be because many of the able bodied people have shunned agriculture, sold off land to buy motor cycles and acquire new brides. Mr. Mondo added that poverty cannot be avoided with this kind of attitude hence our thinking must change from peasantry to modern thinking and planning. He urged the youth to be the focused by setting goals, missions for their lives.

Mr. Mondo revealed that according to statistics, 78% of population is between the age 1-30 years and that Uganda has the third fastest growing population. It is deplorable that our nation has 1.2 million children born every year while out of these 56% is out of a non planned pregnancy and that percentage of 24.6 teenage pregnancies is the highest in Sub Saharan Africa.

He advised the youth to exploit the potential of agriculture to earn a living and emulate role models such Mr. Mulwana and the President of Uganda in taking on agriculture as an enterprise. He expressed concern that agriculture sector is not yet where it ought to be at 50 years of independence despite the fact that the country is fact is gifted by nature, a good climate (2

seasons) apart from the repercussions of tampering with nature. The youth should make use of the agriculture facility within the bank to invest in commercial farming. He emphasized the need to move from rain fed agriculture to irrigation fed agriculture. He also advised the youth to get involved in various points along the value chain such as agro processing and storage. “Every problem can be turned into a business venture”, he said.

Mr. Mondo advised that the strength of youth lies in cooperating and this can be birthed out the youth forum if youth commit to it. This is a revival of a young famers association that once existed. Such networks can easily tap resources that exist in government and banks. Youth should be at the forefront of and part of change agent. He expressed the desire to see the forum grow and have representation at the grass roots by next year with a subscription of at least 2 million and for the youth to be innovative and creative. He urged government to find strategies of having innovative and creative minds because soft skills are lacking among the youth since they contribute 85% in making one better.

He encouraged the youth to research, read e.g. News paper pull outs and use ICT to enhance agriculture especially in marketing. Youth embrace mentorship and coaching by role models. The Ministry is trying to reestablish district farm institutes. Also pull a leaf from the new visions pull outs. He finally pledged government’s support.

Launch of Youth in Agriculture Forum (YiAF)



The youth displaying their White T-shirts with the print of the theme of the day during the as the Guest of Honour launched the Youth in Agriculture Forum

T-Shirts with the inscription “Farm power youth conference 2012; Youth revamping agriculture” were distributed to all participants. Mr. Mondo launched the Youth in Agriculture Forum on behalf of government and told the youth to make use of large chunks of land lying idle and to avoid being part the percentage of people living under the poverty line.

Conclusion

In summary, the Farm Power Youth Conference was such a success as all the day’s events occurred as planned and organized. It opened up the minds of the youth to indentify various opportunities in agriculture so as to earn a living, employ other youth and promote the sector in addition to contributing to the development of the country. The launch of the Youth in Agriculture Forum marked the beginning of a new chapter in the advocating for the Youth engagement in agriculture. It is to operate basing on the resolutions and recommendations that emerged from the conference and more in order to rekindle the youth’s minds and the attention of the government as regards to improving the agricultural sector.