



ASENET
— UGANDA —

AGRICULTURE SECTOR NETWORK UGANDA

THE
AGRICULTURE
ECONOMIC
FORUM

THEME

"REVITALIZING UGANDA'S AGRICULTURE: YOUTH INNOVATION AS THE ENGINE OF GROWTH IN AN ERA OF REDUCED DONOR AID."

DATE

25TH JULY, 2025

LOCATION

KAMPALA SERENA HOTEL



1. INTRODUCTION

Uganda's agriculture sector remains the cornerstone of national economic development, employing over 70% of the population and contributing significantly to food security, livelihoods, and export revenues. Historically, development assistance and donor aid have been instrumental in funding agricultural extension services, research and development, value chain development, irrigation infrastructure, and climate adaptation programs. In recent years, however, Uganda has experienced a marked decline in donor support to the agricultural sector. The shift has been driven by changing global aid priorities, reduced bilateral commitments, and increasing emphasis on domestic resource mobilization. This withdrawal has placed strain on ongoing initiatives and threatens progress in critical areas such as agro-industrialization, youth engagement, and sustainability-focused farming models.

Amid these challenges lies an opportunity: Uganda's youth represent a demographic dividend that, if properly empowered, can drive agricultural transformation through innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship. With digital tools, renewable energy, climate-smart practices, and innovative finance, young agripreneurs are redefining what agriculture can look like in a modern economy.

2. RATIONALE FOR HOLDING THE FORUM

- a) Uganda's agriculture sector has historically relied on significant support from development partners for financing agricultural programs, infrastructure, research, and extension services. However, recent trends indicate a sharp decline in external funding due to shifting donor priorities, global economic disruptions, and governance-related concerns. This reduction has created a funding vacuum that threatens the continuity and scale of critical agricultural initiatives, especially those aimed at smallholder farmers and rural development.
- b) **Need for Homegrown and Innovative Solutions:** The decline in donor support presents an urgent call for Uganda to rethink its agricultural development model by focusing on internal resource mobilization, private sector engagement, and innovation. A national dialogue provides a platform for policy-makers, investors, researchers, youth, and development actors to collaboratively develop strategic responses that ensure the resilience and sustainability of the agriculture sector.
- c) **Leveraging Youth as Catalysts for Transformation:** With over 75% of Uganda's population below the age of 35, the youth represent an untapped demographic dividend. They bring digital skills, entrepreneurial energy, and fresh ideas that can be harnessed to drive agribusiness, mechanization, climate-smart agriculture, and value addition. However, they face systemic barriers such as limited access to land, capital, and markets. The dialogue will prioritize policies and investments that remove these barriers and position youth at the center of agricultural transformation.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE DIALOGUE

To provide a platform for national stakeholders to evaluate the impact of declining donor support on Uganda's agriculture and to co-create practical pathways for leveraging youth innovation to drive sustainable growth and resilience in the sector.

4. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To assess the socio-economic implications of reduced external funding for agriculture in Uganda.
- To highlight youth-led innovations, agribusiness models, and digital solutions that can scale with domestic support.
- To explore policy reforms, institutional arrangements, and investment models that can enable youth to lead agricultural transformation.
- To facilitate partnerships among government, private sector, financial institutions, and development partners for sustainable agriculture financing.
- To promote knowledge sharing and visibility through exhibitions, product showcases, and interactive learning spaces.



5. KEY DISCUSSION AREAS

- **Aid Transition:** Understanding the trends, risks, and opportunities in reduced donor aid to agriculture.
- **Youth Innovation:** Showcasing agritech, processing, and sustainable production models driven by youth.
- **Finance & Investment:** Strategies for increasing domestic financing, including blended finance, public-private partnerships, and agribusiness venture capital.
- **Policy Alignment:** Creating an enabling environment for youth-led agriculture through regulatory and institutional reforms.
- **Climate-Smart Agriculture:** Mainstreaming resilience, sustainability, and digital advisory in agriculture.
- **Knowledge Sharing & Partnerships:** Identifying synergies among actors to scale up youth innovations and local resource mobilization.

6. Format and Activities

The Dialogue will be held as a one-day high-level event combining strategic policy dialogue with practical, interactive learning and visibility platforms.

Key Components:

- a) Opening Ceremony & Keynote Speeches (Government and development leaders)
- b) High-Level Panel Discussions (Donor transitions, financing innovation, youth & policy)
- c) Breakout Sessions (Thematic parallel discussions with technical experts and youth)
- d) Youth Innovation & Agribusiness Exhibitions
- e) Youth and partner institutions will showcase successful agritech startups, agro-enterprises, climate-smart solutions, and digital tools.
- f) Exhibition booths by development agencies, banks, agribusiness accelerators, research bodies, and NGOs.
- g) Networking Lunch & Matchmaking (Investors, youth, and policymakers)
- h) Dialogue Resolutions & Roadmap Presentation

Transition into the **Annual National Agriculture Sector Awards Gala**

7. Expected Outcomes

- a) A comprehensive assessment report on the state of donor aid and its implications for Uganda's agricultural development.
- b) A position paper or communique outlining policy recommendations to strengthen youth-driven agricultural transformation.
- c) Identification of funding opportunities, innovative financing mechanisms, and investment models to reduce dependence on donor aid.
- d) Strengthened multi-stakeholder partnerships and commitments to support youth-led agricultural enterprises.
- e) A national visibility platform for youth innovators and agripreneurs, including investment linkages and mentoring opportunities.
- f) Commitments for follow-up actions, including regional dialogues, pilot initiatives, and inclusion in national development planning.

8. Target Participants

- a) Agriculture Sector players
- b) Government Ministries & Agencies:
- c) Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry & Fisheries (MAAIF), Ministry of Finance (MoFPED), National Planning Authority (NPA), Uganda Investment Authority (UIA)
- d) Youth Agripreneurs and Startups
- e) Development Partners and Donor Agencies
- f) Private Sector Investors and Agribusiness Firms
- g) Financial Institutions and Banks (e.g., PostBank, Stanbic, Agricultural Credit Facility reps)
- h) Civil Society and Farmer Organizations
- i) Academia, Think Tanks, and Research Institutions
- j) Media and Communication Partners

6. THE AGRIC EXHIBITION

For the first time ever, there will be a partners and youth exhibition running alongside the One day Agriculture sector economic dialogue. The event is an opportunity to show case innovations, business ideas and celebrate new era of solutions to the sector issues. It is also an opportunity to be part of discussions regarding the agriculture sector. Over 100 exhibitors are expected to showcase their offerings including the latest industry innovations, best practice and new technology solutions.

A detailed profile for event has been shared with all partner states.



7. THEME, PROGRAMME, VENUE AND DATE

The proposed theme for this dialogue is **"Revitalizing Uganda's Agriculture: Youth Innovation as the Engine of Growth in an Era of Reduced Donor Aid."**

This theme captures a timely and strategic focus for Uganda's agricultural transformation in the face of declining donor support. It emphasizes the urgent need to shift from aid dependence to homegrown solutions, placing **youth innovation** at the center of this transition.

Uganda's agriculture sector, which sustains the livelihoods of over 70% of the population, is currently facing funding challenges due to reductions in donor aid. This situation calls for a **new approach that leverages the creativity, energy, and entrepreneurial spirit of Uganda's youth** to drive agricultural growth and sustainability.

By empowering young people with modern tools, skills, technology, and supportive policy frameworks, Uganda can unlock innovative agribusiness models, boost productivity, and improve food security. The theme also highlights the importance of **local ownership, investment in research and innovation**, and building resilient agricultural systems that can thrive even in financially constrained environments.

Ultimately, this theme sets the stage for national dialogue, policy shift, and practical partnerships aimed at **revitalizing agriculture through youth-led innovation**, ensuring the sector not only survives but thrives in a future with less external support.

The forum will be punctuated with sub-themes on topical and emerging issues in public procurement which include the following:

- a) Youth-led Agribusiness: Catalyzing Inclusive Growth and Job Creation.
- b) Innovation in Action: Digital Tools and Climate-Smart Solutions for a Resilient Agriculture.
- c) Financing the Future: Unlocking Domestic Investment for Youth Agripreneurs.
- d) From Aid to Agency: Building Self-Reliant Agricultural Systems Through Youth-Led Initiatives.

8. PROGRAMME

The proposed duration of the forum will be One day. The Programme for the forum will include:the opening protocol ceremonies;

- a keynote speech;
- the implementation status of the government agriculture strategy and agenda;
- And country specific presentations on the theme and adoption of the resolutions of the Kampala declarations.
- There will also be presenters drawn from the participating organizations, the public sector, academia, civil society and private sector actors.

PROGRAMME FOR THE AGRICULTURE ECONOMIC FORUM

Time	Activity	Presenter	Chairperson
Day 1 (25th July 2025)			
8:30 – 9:15	Registration	Secretariat	
9.30-9.15: Playing/Singing Anthems (EAC and Uganda)			
9.15 – 9.20	Opening Remarks	Board Chairman, ASENET	Master of ceremonies
9.20 – 9.45	Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon Minister state Livestock • Country Representative WFP • Country Representative FAO • Country Director Heifer International • Development Partners (EU) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon Bright Rwamirama • 	
	Keynote Address: "Harnessing Youth-Driven Agripreneurship for a Self-Sustaining Agricultural Future in Uganda	TBA	
9.45 – 10.15	Official Opening Speech by the Guest of Honor	Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda	
10:15 – 10.30	Group Photo Session and Press Conference with the Media/		Master of Ceremonies
10.30 – 11.00	Tea/Coffee Break: Networking & Refreshment	All	
11.00– 13:00	Panel Presentation: <i>"The Future is Now: Empowering Young Ugandan Innovators to Lead Agricultural Transformation</i>	1.	Master of Ceremonies
13:00 – 14:00	Networking Lunch Break	All	Service Provider
14:00 –14:30.	<i>Reimagining Agricultural Growth: Youth as Architects of a Donor-Independent Uganda</i>	TBA	
14:30 – 15:00	Plenary Discussion		
15:00 –15.30	<i>Appreciating Financing Innovations, towards a Not Dependency: Unlocking Youth-Led Agritech and Enterprise"</i>	Bank of Uganda	Republic of Burundi
16.00 – 16:30	Rapporteur/Resolutions		
16:30 -17:00	Recognition of Partners & Closing Remarks		
17:00 -17:30	Networking Cocktail <i>(detailed Programme to be released)</i>		

Participations

The forum will adopt a hybrid method of participation where some participants will physically attend the forum while the majority will attend virtually. ASENET will organize live streams on various platforms.

Only 200 slots will be available for physical attendance which will be allocated to the various partner states as contained in Table 2 below:

1. BUDGET FOR THE FORUM

(Under discussion by the organizing committee)

2. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The apex decision making organ for the preparation of the ASED is the summit of the Heads of Agriculture organizations in Uganda working in partnership with Farmwise Communications

Internally, the **ASENET** Secretariat has constituted the core ASED organizing committee Chaired by the Senior Manager Strategy and planning to undertake the preparations for the forum.

This committee will report directly to the ASENET Executive Director and may constitute any other sub-committees as and when need arises for the successful organization of the forum. The following sub-committees have so far been appointed and have begun working on the different areas to deliver the ASED. These are:

- i. The Quality Assurance Committee.
- ii. The Finance Committee.
- iii. The Publicity committee.

9. FORUM OPENING CEREMONIES

- The Forum will be officially opened by the Prime Minister and Minister of East African Community Affairs, Rt. Hon. Robina Nabanja
- Uganda's Minister of state for livestock.
- We shall have heads of diplomatic organizations partners
- Other participants will be government Ministers, Members of Parliament, Chief Executive Officers of the high spend entities from both the public and private sectors and civil society organizations.

10. PRAYER

This is therefore to request the partner to:

- i. Take note of the updates and the proposed new dates;
 - Confirmation of attendance;
 - The number of delegates from the partner organizations;
 - The programme and topics; and
 - The session chairpersons, presenters and panelists.