

REPORT ON THE EIGHTEENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM.

DATE: 24TH APRIL 2009

VENUE: ELLY'S MOTEL SEETA, MUKONO.

BACKGROUND

Uganda Change Agent Association (UCAA) is a voluntary member based nation wide association that provides training to rural men and women ensuring that these people are empowered to initiate and sustain their own self reliant, economic, political and social development processes. Membership of the organization is diverse including people from different regions of the country.

As UCAA works towards strengthening the political development process, focus has been channeled to creating a situation where rural men and women are able to confidently participate in intellectual debates that affect their livelihood. As UCAA encourages men and women to analyze and understand the root causes of the different challenges they face, a conscious awakening is stirred amongst them. This stirring is further fuelled up as UCAA encourages the rural men and women to create their own possible solutions to these challenges. As the solutions are successfully implemented, rural men and women are now confident of their own abilities and are in greater position to participate and add value to decision making processes at the grassroots.

One of the key avenues UCAA provides to strengthen this political development process is at its National Development Forum. This is an annual forum where members of the association convene to discuss a key topic whose effects are wide spread in the communities where the Change Agents live and work. Local councils, district leaders and other development workers are invited to attend the forum to encourage deeper and wider dialogue. At the forum, practical examples, debates, analysis of key issues and all round participation is encouraged. It is important to note that the rural men and women at the grassroots select the topic discussed at the development forum.

This year's topic was; **"has land allocation to investors increased job creation or poverty?"** Discussants were;

Mr. Richard Isiko, change agent from Jinja Rubaga Branch, Jinja district.

Dr. Magie Kigozi, Executive Director Uganda Investment Authority.

The forum was moderated by Mr. Dimba David Kenyi, change agent from Koboko central branch and UCAA Board member representing West Nile region.

The forum was attended by 117 development workers and the Guest of Honour was: Hon. James Baba, State Minister in the Vice President's office.

OBJECTIVEES OF THE FORUM

- To analyze the impact of land allocation to investors in Uganda.
 - In relation to job creation.
 - In relation to poverty alleviation.

- To identify intervention that needs to be addressed for sustainable economic development.
- To identify the role UCAA can play to strengthen positive impact and sensitize on negative ones.

INTRODUCTION

The moderator called the house to order by requesting them to sing the National anthem and UCAA anthem.

The UCAA BOD Chairperson welcomed all guests and recognized their presence and those not yet in absence.

She welcomed the secretariat to the function that handles development issues that cuts across to the people we serve.

The chairperson assured the Guest of Honour that in such function the country in regionally represented and went a head to introduce members.

She emphasized that what will be deliberated shall be consumed by the whole country. By the fact that the issue of discussion has been in parliament for long, some issues can beef up national discussion and declared the forum open.

The moderator, referred to land issues on internet and topical letters, emails to speaker of parliament all refer to land challenges, highlighted on dimensional land issues for purpose of enlightening the house so that deliberations can be backed and fruitful.

FIRST PRESENTER: Isiko Richard, Change Agent.

After saluting the protocol he gave an insight on the topic: He confirmed that land allocations to investors have caused more poverty to individuals by quoting the following percentages;

80% of Ugandans live below poverty line.

95% of the poor live in rural areas.

5% scattered across.

The strength of the enemy (poverty) depicted by the percentage referred to above should be addressed through a combination of strategies without forgetting human rights.

The presenter challenged Government strategy of reducing poverty through, land allocation as failure and sighted the following:

- Investors are in the country to reap profit, repatriate it and they are not interested in uplifting the poor.
- Jobs promised to nationals' ends up as promises and expectations. Few employed are paid pee nut and consumed by daily expenditure.
- Poor working conditions expose the few employed to unhealthy conditions, which ends up consuming little earned on medical expense.
- Supervision is unhealthy and inhuman.

- Poverty is in rural areas and investors are lining and crowded in Kampala.
- Exploitative agents have frustrated many Ugandans instead of helping them out of poverty.
- Investors create work for their nations.

Suggestions from first presenter

- Empower people to create and initiate their own development processes.
- Empower people to form advocacy agencies and manage their affairs.
- The poor should be empowered and should have access to resources, capital accumulation etc.
- Local investors should be protected, given affordable resources and taxes.
- Investment should be regionally focused.

SECOND PRESENTOR: Dr. Maggie Kigozi, Executive Director Uganda Investment Authority.

She thanked the previous speaker for highlighting issues commonly put in press. On the other side, she clarified on an issue that justifies location of land to investors as follows:

Uganda has unutilized land all over. Comprehensive strategies like NAADS, Bonna Bagagaware should be given priority. She emphasized that the issue be cross cutting not only looking at foreign investors only.

She highlighted her Justification for investors.

- Uganda does not differentiate investors, local and foreigners.
- Investors has created Jobs for example, Mukwano, Zain and wava were quoted as heavy employer.
- Technology enhancement is promoted and affordable.
- Land ; - industrial areas, government strategy in each district has started Electricity, water, roads opened pending, investors' application.
She emphasized that customary land is not easy to develop
- Poverty eradication experienced;
40,000 jobs created every year by investors
Taxes on investors has contributed much to national budget
- She clarified that Poor condition at work affect our people because we do not follow labour laws and they are protective.
- She clarified that those termed as fake investors; these are investors with trading license not industrial production.
- She emphasized that exploitative agents should stop.

OPEN DISCUSSION.

Having listened to the presentation from the panelists, the audience was invited to an open discussion as follows;

Two issues: 1. Good to have investors - problem, investors displace people without compensation thus making them poorer.

2. Employed with pee nut is better than zero income.

Government should empower communities to start Income Generating Activities on the land.

Pee nut payment, government should discuss issues of payment to locals. *(By John Byamukama Programme Officer Western region)*

The community is not aware of programme regarding gazettement of lands, programmes and laws that protect workers. *(By Zahara Hajjat- Arua District)*

Required clarification from Dr. Maggie, that investors aim at increasing output not considering environmental challenges *(By Akello Lucy, UCAA Executive Director)*.

Money will work for you not you working for money. *(Bashwekana Francis, Change Agent from Kashari Branch)*.

✓ First presenter's response:

He kept on emphasizing that a living wage should be set.

✓ Second Presenter's response:

Displaced people- Government is on side of small people and displaced people are paid and either relocated and given land title.

On employment, Communities be educated on multi-sectoral approach in problem solving.

Minimum wage is being discussed in parliament. Labour Laws exist. Civil society should step up and mobilize communities. Sustainability of companies is felt by investors; NEMA is emphasizing on environmental protections.

Put money in productive project, Pollution, isolated, vulnerable, hinges on evolution. *(By Rugyendo Emmanuel, Kabale District)*

Un used land checks global warming that affects Europe .This is extended by investor because we are not protected forcing people to sell land to investors why? Land should be utilized maximally but in a preservative way *(Nafuna Ketty, Mbale District)*

Education and knowledge is Power. Government is doing double standards why replace schools by allocating it to investors for a different purpose instead of using vast land in rural areas?

Local investors not promoted and protected. What is the focus of government on local? *(By Irene, Lira District and UCAA BOD Chairperson)*

Lots of land not utilized because of insurgency in the north. Tools are needed. Investors claim to have money what about Locals who have land? Why not partnership?
(By Jack Lumoro, Kitgum District)

There must be Clear demarcation on resources. Process of land registration should be checked to reduce land grabbing. *(By Asiimwe Lydia Masindi District)*

Increase of job is for both nationals & internationals. Ugandans are there are but there are 300 Chinese employed in Hima factory including wheel barrow pushers, minister should visit UCAA groups and see how poverty is being chased by Change Agents. Some areas are not utilized because they are dry. Government should provide water.
(By Bwambare Kasese District)

Ugandan green colour should be protected *(By Namusisi Agnes, Kampala District)*

Allen Kagina, the Executive Director of Uganda Revenue Authority is collecting great deal from local and investors but where the income is generated – there are no drugs in hospitals *(By Leonard Ssengonzi, Masaka District)*

The second presenter clarified that Generalizing on challenges of investors shadows those that are good.

Shimoni primary school issue started as a mouth cry of public for life of children crossing busy roads surrounding the school daily.

Over crowding Chinese in Hima is known by government. Terms are clear after 72 months they will go. *(By Dr. Maggie, UIA)*

Remarks from:

UCAA Executive Director

Feel privileged for such forum that has handled land issues in terms of usage, ownership, and land degradation.

Much as government has intervened to solve problems, am impressed with deliberations and urge change agents to effect the suggestions.

The Executive Director, UCAA thanked the panel for honoring the invitation to the forum. She noted that the session was very educative and fruitful. She urged everyone to spread the knowledge that they had received.

UCAA Chairperson

She welcomed Minister Hon. Baba James (Minister of state in Vice President's office) to address the forum on government perspective and thereafter close the NDF officially.

Minister Hon. Baba James;

Appreciated the presentation of Dr. Magie and thanked the Executive Director for invitation and follow up. He informed the participants that he has known UCAA since 1990s. He appreciated the presentations and told the house that both presenters were clear but compromising.

Referring to Ugandan population of 6.5 million populations 1990

30 million populations 2009, he urged Ugandans to think about investments on land from that angle of the 30 million people and the issue of rural urban migration.

Unemployment rate in Uganda

7 million Ugandan are jobless.

8 million Ugandan can raise Ush 2,000/= to live a day.

He cautioned members that Countries that close out foreigners have not developed. Opening up to out side world stimulates development.

Hunger in India in 1960s was due to closeness. After opening up India is a super economic state now.

Population growth in Uganda is so high and the government is planning to create 22 industrial sites. Every year government budgets to buy land reserved for investment strategy. There is also fish and milk processing for export. Flowers were not hard of in Uganda six years back now they are on increase.

Demand for cement is high that's why labour intensive of foreigners is high in Hima.

Income boosting at family level is a concern of government. That's why Bonabaggagawale (prosperity for all programme) exist, NAADS and other multi-sectoral investments by local government and externals efforts. Government will look on conditions of work and payments.

With changes of development let the government open up and foster development through promotion of investors both local and international.

Emphasized that taxes have contributed on Road construction, energy power without depending on funders money. Land bill will address issue of evictions of locals.

On use of Tadoba, (Local Lighting), a project of improved technology for lighting that has been approved to be promoted .Change Agents were urged to take lead when it starts. Provding land to investors will develop Uganda and make our life better. The minister who officiated as the guest of honour closed the forum officially.

Uganda Change Agent Association
Kampala April 2009