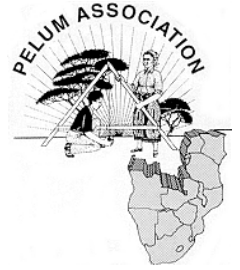


# PELUM Uganda

Participatory Ecological Land Use Management

Plot 155 Kira Road, Kamwokya,  
P.O. Box 35804 Kampala-Uganda  
Tel. 256-414 533 973,  
Email: [pelumuganda@pelumuganda.org](mailto:pelumuganda@pelumuganda.org)  
[www.pelumuganda.org](http://www.pelumuganda.org) or [www.pelumrd.org](http://www.pelumrd.org)



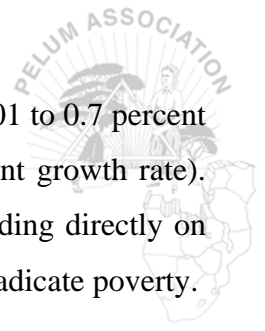
## **PELUM UGANDA'S PROPOSALS TO THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE POLICY DRAFTING COMMITTEE**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Uganda is a network of non-governmental organizations that have chosen to work together to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Uganda. It builds the capacity of its members so that they are able to provide relevant and quality ecological land-use services to smallholder farmers through participatory and gender responsive training, research and networking. PELUM Uganda promotes food security, natural resources management and use of indigenous knowledge. The network also facilitates experiential learning through exposure and exchange visits, topical dialogue and debate at local, national, regional and international levels. PELUM Uganda, through its membership operates in over 66 districts countrywide.

### **2.0 Importance of the National Agriculture Policy to PELUM Uganda**

PELUM Uganda acknowledges the agriculture sector as the backbone of Uganda's economy, on which other sectors are dependent. Although the contribution of agriculture to the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been declining over the years, the sector has continued to dominate the Ugandan economy. It contributed approximately 21 percent of the total GDP in 2009 at current prices and 90 percent to the total export earnings. Agriculture also provides approximately 80 percent of the employment and most industries and services in the country are dependent on this sector. Further, about 85 percent of the population lives in the rural areas where they derive their livelihood from the agricultural sector (UBOS 2010, P.40).



Real growth in agricultural output has declined steadily, from 7.9 percent in 2000/01 to 0.7 percent in 2007/08 (although it did show signs of recovery in 2008/09, with a 2.6 percent growth rate). With 73 percent of all households and the majority of the poor in Uganda depending directly on agriculture for their primary livelihood, this is a serious challenge in the drive to eradicate poverty. (DSIP 2010, P.8).

Given the importance of agriculture to people's livelihoods and the challenges that face it, there is need for an apex policy that will give an overall guidance to all other agricultural related policies, policy frameworks and strategies that have been guiding sector investments. It is hoped that the policy shall culminate into and inform the formulation of an agriculture law that to guide policy and institutional reforms within the sector.

### **3.0 Where we agree**

We hereby take this opportunity to recognize and appreciate the government's effort towards the formulation of the National Agriculture Policy.

Given the importance of the agriculture sector in Uganda, there is need for an overall policy to provide guidance to all actors therein, in order to make investments that will increase agricultural incomes, reduce poverty, improve household food and nutrition security, create employment and stimulate overall economic growth.

We also acknowledge the fact that the vision of the National Agriculture (NA) policy; “A Competitive, Profitable and Sustainable Agriculture Sector” is clear, and all-embracing.

Given the favorable climatic conditions, we do believe that Uganda has a comparative advantage in food production and has the potential of becoming the food basket of the region.

We also agree with a number of other policy statements, needless to break down all of them here.



#### 4.0 Where we differ

1. *The mission of the draft NA policy; ‘Transform Subsistence Farming to Commercial Agriculture’.*

In Uganda, it is well recognized that nearly 90% of the population lives in the rural areas and agriculture is their predominant activity. Approximately 4.5 million smallholder farmers owning an average of 2 ha are the key players in the sector (G. Tumushabe et al. 2007, p.xi).

In order to do large scale production one will need more land than what farmers have now, thus this will call for evictions so that land is given to those who can invest massively that is, using machinery and inorganic inputs to scale up production. We believe this mission only targets farmers towards large scale production, not considering the smallholder farmers who derive livelihoods from mainly agriculture.

#### **Our Proposal**

Revise the mission to; ‘Transform Subsistence Farming to a Sustainable Income Generating Agriculture Sector’. We believe that the proposed mission is more realistic given the subsistence nature of agriculture that is a source of livelihoods to over 83% farmers in Uganda.

2. *The use of biotechnology and improved seeds in smallholder farming.*

This might create way for Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) into small scale farming, and yet they are unsustainable and capital-intensive. One of the pillars of sustainable agriculture is seed security for the small scale farmers. This has been passed on from generation to generation by farmers. Over dependence on improved seeds like hybrids and GMOs will result into unsustainable and capital intensive agriculture which few farmers can afford. This could be made worse by patenting as is the case with GMOs which will result to loss of seed security as farmers will depend on multinationals seed companies for seeds.

#### **Our Proposal**

The NA policy should promote the principles of sustainable agriculture in all its dimensions. We propose a review of the policy to focus on farmer-led, sustainable agriculture, which is economically viable, ecologically sound, and culturally adaptable.



### 3. *Additional Strategies under Objective 5:*

#### **Our Proposals**

- Promote a participatory demand-driven, action-oriented research to ensure sustainable use and management of agriculture resources.
- MAAIF to ensure coordination and supervision of sustainable use and management of agriculture resources.

### **5.0 Conclusion**

We re-instate our recognition of the government's effort towards the formulation of the National Agriculture Policy. We do hope that it shall inform the improvement and implementation processes of sustainable agriculture practices in Uganda.

### ***References***

1. Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS); Statistical Abstract; June 2010.
2. Agriculture Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP): 2010/11- 2014-15; Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry & Fisheries; Republic of Uganda; March 2010.
3. G. Tumushabe et al., 2007, Integrated Assessment of Uganda's Organic Agriculture Sub-Sector.