

## **Speech of the Director Crop Resources of National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO)**

Members of the three UN agencies, colleagues from NARO, the local government, members of the press, ladies and gentlemen, I want to welcome you this inception for the project on 'Mainstreaming food loss reduction Initiatives for smallholders in Food Deficit Areas'.

The government of Uganda is committed to reduction in postharvest losses. One key policy being implemented in Uganda is the Development Strategy and Investment plan. This is the guiding policy for the Ministry of Agriculture Animal industry and Fisheries, under which one key element is the need to promote 'farming as a business'. This concept is designed to ensure that farmers obtain increased income especially at household level to spearhead national economic development.

Further to this, the country is also party to the CAADP and is bound by the African Union Malabo declarations which aim at halving hunger by 2025. These key guiding policies will largely be contributed to by the attainment of the outputs of this project.

The government of Uganda is therefore happy to partner with FAO, IFAD and the WFP in this project which will address a key link in the production chain by addressing the exceedingly high postharvest losses being faced along the maize, beans and sunflower value chains. Current losses are estimated to be as high as 30% of the generated yields on cereals 40-45% in roots and tubers and over 60% for fruits and vegetables. This translates in significant portion of the nations' Gross Domestic Product. The reduction in postharvest losses, will thus directly benefit the nation by enhancing the utilisable yield. By identifying the critical loss points in the bean, sunflower and maize value chains and addressing them, the project will result in enhanced efficiency of the value chains, thus translating into benefits for our people.

The ever increasing population means that the demand for food to feed the nation will require more investment in the food sector. Thus efforts to reduce postharvest losses will ensure sustainable food sources and enable reduced food imports which will translate in enhanced food security and income.

There are numerous agencies involved in the promotion of enhanced Agricultural production in Uganda. Among these the WFP, IFAD, and FAO partners are key and are largely involved in numerous efforts to address challenges along the grain value chain. In line with this there is need for better synergies among the different players to enable attainment of more impact at national level. This joint project by the three UN agencies thus presents an opportunity for the joint attainment of delivering solutions to the postharvest loss levels in Uganda. With more focused efforts in post harvest loss reduction, different players will contribute to ensure that the gains obtained through increased production and better market arrangements will not be lost due to poor postharvest handling and food waste along the maize, bean and sunflower value chains.

In this workshop the different stakeholders are given an opportunity to share about the intended project outputs and provide feedback on the plans. I want to wish you good deliberations during this event and hereby declare this workshop open.

