

MECHANIZING COFFEE FARMING IN NORTHERN UGANDA

NEWS LETTER



The Presidential CEO Forum (PCF) in collaboration with the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) embarked on a significant Stakeholder engagement in Northern Uganda aimed at advancing coffee cultivation in the region. Their collaborative efforts aimed to revitalize the local coffee industry, boost productivity, and enhance the livelihoods of local farmers. The delegation engaged with various coffee value chain actors, district technical staff, and cultural and religious leaders to foster collaboration and support for the region's coffee cultivation efforts.

The Government has undertaken several key initiatives to advance the mechanization and processing of coffee in Northern Uganda. These initiatives include advocating for infrastructure development, distribution of coffee seedlings, provision of technical support and training, ensuring quality control and market access, and promotion of domestic coffee consumption. These efforts collectively aim to enhance the region's coffee industry and support the livelihoods of local farmers.

The engagement centered on the coffee production value chain in the Gulu, Oyam, and Omoro districts. In Oyam District, the team engaged with the Loro Coffee Cooperative Society, a coffee cooperative/processor group, along with local farmers. They also visited coffee farmers and the Paidongo Coffee Growers Cooperative Society in Omoro District. The engagement concluded with a high-level consultative meeting at Bomah Hotel, Gulu City, attended by farmers, political leaders, cultural leaders, and district and city technical staff, among others.



**Gen Salim Saleh, Chief Coordinator
Operation Wealth Creation**

While addressing some of the challenges faced by the farmers, Gen. Saleh said, ***“I am pleased that the people of Northern Uganda have started embracing coffee growing in the region. With this progress, financing can be secured.”*** The people of Northern Uganda have recognized the benefits of growing coffee, which could significantly change the region's economic trajectory. Gen Saleh commended the Uganda Coffee Development Authority and the Presidential CEO Forum for organizing such an insightful and engaging workshop, allowing them to receive first-hand information from the coffee farmers in the region.

The Presidential CEO Forum has identified the challenges, particularly with commercial banks accessing ACF funds meant to be loaned at 12% per annum, which they are not fulfilling. Additionally, only 3% of the allocated funds are being invested in coffee cultivation, an abnormally low figure given coffee's substantial contribution to Uganda's economic growth.



**Hon Fred Bwino, State Minister for
Agriculture, Animal Industries and
Fisheries**

Coffee cultivation deserves special attention, with the government taking two key action points. First, mobilizing nursery operators in the region to negotiate with farmers to accept a supply of coffee seedlings on credit, with government assurance. This one-off supply initiative aims to ensure the availability of coffee seedlings throughout the region, catering to the land already allocated for coffee cultivation. Second, the government should support coffee farmers in Northern Uganda by financing farmers' cooperatives to boost coffee cultivation in the region.

Hon. Fred Bwino pledged to actively follow up on the Gulu Resolutions. He emphasized that, despite the government's policy shift, Northern Uganda deserves special consideration in coffee production.

These initiatives are part of a broader strategy to transform Northern Uganda's agricultural landscape. By ensuring a steady supply of coffee seedlings and providing financial support to cooperatives, the government aims to foster a robust coffee industry that can significantly contribute to the region's economic development. Enhanced coffee production can lead to increased incomes for farmers, create jobs, and stimulate related industries, thereby improving the overall livelihood of the communities in Northern Uganda.



**Irene Birungi Mugisha, PCF
Coordinator**

The Presidential CEO Forum, through its mandate, focuses on three main aspects: consolidating private sector players, developing indigenous solutions, and driving industrialization. As we move towards the upcoming 5th Bi-Annual Private Sector CEO Retreat, the focus will be on transforming Northern Uganda into a commercialized production and logistical hub for export. This will concentrate on key perennial crops grown in the region, such as cassava, millet, sorghum, rice, maize, and coffee, among others.

By addressing challenges such as the need for coffee processing facilities and tractors, we aim to find local solutions and increase the number of coffee farmers. With an emphasis on value addition, our focus will be on utilizing the arable land effectively, with the government providing off-takers and continuing training in collaboration with UCDA. This training will help women and youth establish themselves further. Through these initiatives, we seek to work collectively to support local communities. Northern Uganda is poised for significant progress.

This stakeholder engagement is part of the preparatory activities for the 5th Bi-Annual Private Sector CEO Retreat, focusing on gathering information on existing policies supporting the commercialization of coffee production, agro-industrialization, and exports in Northern Uganda.

UCDA REPRESENTATIVE

The Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) is ready to promote coffee growing in Northern Uganda. The Region is blessed with its vast fertile land, and has traditionally relied on cotton, which has not significantly improved the economic status of the population. In collaboration with the Presidential initiative through the Presidential CEO Forum (PCF), we will sensitize the people of Northern Uganda to embrace coffee cultivation to foster socio-economic transformation. Coffee's long-term potential to sustain economic growth makes it the ideal crop to drive the region's economic development.

The intercropping of coffee with bananas is an experimental approach aimed at attracting farmers in Northern Uganda to engage in coffee cultivation. Through this initiative, UCDA has provided free land to coffee farmers in the region to support their efforts.

Interaction with the Paidongo Coffee Growers Cooperative Society

The Paidongo Coffee Growers Cooperative Society, located in Paidha town, Zombo district, in Uganda's West Nile region, was established in 1962 and officially registered under the Co-operative Societies Ordinance of 1947.



The cooperative supports coffee farmers in the districts of Arua, Nebbi, Zombo, and Pakwach through 35 primary cooperative societies, with an average membership of about 140 individuals, including approximately 30% women and 20% youth under 35. The Cooperative Society aims at enhancing the livelihoods of smallholder farmers by promoting sustainable coffee production, ensuring market access, and providing affordable financial services.

The cooperative aims to become a leading producer of high-quality coffee in Uganda by 2040.

Playing a crucial role in the local economy, the cooperative provides coffee seedlings, technical support, and a marketing platform for coffee growers. This initiative boosts coffee production, improves quality, and increases farmers' incomes. The cooperative also focuses on engaging youth in coffee cultivation, promoting sustainable farming practices, and ensuring that the entire community benefits from the coffee industry.



Visit to Progressive Commercial Coffee Farmer

With a background in agricultural extension work, Ongaba William Pike, a prominent coffee farmer based in Omoro District, Northern Uganda, manages a 10-acre coffee plantation. Since 2014, Mr. Pike has been actively involved in enhancing his coffee production techniques. Despite facing numerous challenges, he successfully harvested 5.5 tons of coffee last year, which he sold for approximately UGX 18 million. This year, he anticipates increasing his yield and revenue further through improved irrigation methods and continued pest management.

In addition to his farming activities, Mr. Pike has highlighted the need for better government support, particularly in providing irrigation equipment to combat drought. He is a strong advocate for reducing the use of harmful chemicals in pest control to ensure safer and more sustainable farming practices. Among the challenges he faces are the coffee twig borer pest, drought, and theft. To mitigate these issues, he uses ethanol bait traps for pest control and has implemented fencing around his plantation to prevent theft.

Interaction with Loro Coffee Farmers Cooperation

Loro Cooperative Society is a pivotal entity supporting farmers in its region through various initiatives and services. Founded to empower local agricultural communities, it



offers crucial benefits such as market access, training and Education, credit and financial services, and infrastructure development among others. Loro Cooperative Society plays a crucial role in improving farmers' livelihoods by fostering solidarity, enhancing efficiency, and ensuring sustainable agricultural practices in the region. crucial benefits such as market access, training and Education, credit and financial services, and infrastructure development among others. Loro Cooperative Society crucial benefits such

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During the visit, the PCF and UCDA delegation inspected the processing facility established for Coffee Value addition by the cooperative. Despite its potential, the facility remains underutilized due to the power supply issues. The visit underscored the need for enhanced infrastructure and support to address these pressing issues and improve the overall productivity and sustainability of coffee farming in the area.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP MEETING, BOMAH HOTEL, GULU CITY

Following the different farm Visits, the PCF and UCDA delegation alongside farmers, political leaders, cultural leaders, district and city technical staff, among others convened at Bomah Hotel, Gulu City for in-depth one-on-one discussions with farmers.

Some of the Challenges raised by the different farmers include: non-functional coffee facilities, prolonged droughts, climate change, limited access to coffee seedlings, lack of machinery such as tractors, poor road networks, limited access to low-interest loans for farmers, few Coffee farmer organizations, inadequate knowledge and skills on Coffee production among others.



