

## **PRESIDENT MUSEVENI CALLED FOR MORE SUPPORT TO SCIENTISTS DURING THE WORLD FOOD DAY 2015.**

The 2015 World Food Day commemoration was held in Fort portal District in Western Uganda and the President of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, was the guest of honor. In his statement at the event, President Museveni emphasized research and innovation in the agriculture sector as crucial instruments in solving food production challenges in Uganda.

He called on the Uganda Parliament to support Ugandan agricultural scientists in their efforts in developing improved varieties of crops and livestock. “We have trained scientists and they have the knowledge to process anything from beans, cassava, groundnuts and potatoes, among others. The next challenge is to provide funding to scale up their innovations,” he said.

The President also noted that scientists improve current crop varieties through biotechnology. They produce disease and drought resistant varieties which thrive in changing climatic conditions, but their efforts have been frustrated by the delay to pass the biotechnology and safety bill that has been shelved in Parliament.

President Museveni also appealed to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to provide more support to the agriculture sector, especially in production, productivity and value chain development.

“We could do with more support from FAO. If FAO has some good money, not these small things, they should bring it and we use it,” the President said.

He was responding to the FAO Country Representative, Alhaji Jallow’s appeal to the government to extend social protection programmes to smallholder farmers, family farmers, rural women, fisher folk,

indigenous communities and other vulnerable or marginalized people to enable them cope with production challenges.

The president expressed interest in some of the crops under research at NaSARRI when he called upon the Director of research Dr. Michael A. Ugen at NaSARRI to give an update about cotton research and later called Dr. Lubadde Geoffrey a Research officer to brief him about pearl millet research progress.

Minister for Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Honorable Tress Bucyanayandi, thanked FAO for the great work being done in the country. “FAO supplied cows, and added value to honey, milk and fruits. FAO also contributed significantly to strengthening extension services through the FAO Farmer Field Schools (FFS) methodology,” said the Minister.

Whereas there are some pockets of shortages caused by natural disasters like too much rain or prolonged droughts, occurrences of pests and diseases, among other challenges, the Minister emphasized that, as a country, Uganda is food secure and remains a food basket for the region.

The 2015 World Food Day commemoration under the theme: “*Social Protection and Agriculture: Breaking the cycle of rural poverty*,” was graced by high level dignitaries, Ministers, Parliamentarians, UN agencies in Uganda, Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations, among others.

Different organizations exhibited new agricultural technologies/techniques, improved crop varieties, livestock, value added products and information technologies suitable for smallholder farmers.