1.0 Introduction

The NSA report of 2020 marks the 8th Non-State Actors (NSA) active participation in the JASAR processes. It however, comes in at the point where the agricultural sector is starting the implementation of the new NIP in the context of the National Development Plan III (NDP-III) where the sector is significantly expected to contribute to the programme of agro-industrialization. Further, more often than not the sector faces with inherent challenges of Covid-19 pandemic (greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions), it also presents opportunities for avoided emissions of GHGs and carbon storage in the soil through climate smart agricultural and bio-economic measures. Low budget performance, according to the Agriculture Sector Semi-annual Progress Report (ASSPII) for the financial year (FY) 2019/20 to 2020/21, indicates that the MAAIF’s sub-sector performance for the financial year (FY) 2019/20 was rated at 76% whereas that of National Agricultural Research Organization (NARA) was rated at 79.7%. The Agricultural Research Program during FY 2019/20 was rated at 76% whereas that of NHIF was rated at 79.7%. The MAAIF’s Agriculture Research Program during FY 2019/20 was rated at 76% whereas that of NHIF was rated at 79.7%. In this regard, Government can partner with quarantine services, such as NALFA and Finance and Industry (NAD) to and with stakeholders to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of credit guarantees in the Ugandan agricultural industry.

2. Background and context

The agricultural sector remains central to the economy of Uganda. The sector employs a majority of the population at 65%, according to the Uganda National Household Survey 2019 (2019/2020); with more women engaged in agricultural activities compared to 50%. The agricultural sector according to the NEDA it was identified as one of the priority development sectors needed to achieve a “transformed Uganda from a haven for a mind to a mindset and product based economy” (NEDA, 2005). The services sector contributes the largest part of the GDP followed by the agricultural sector at 27%. The manufacturing sector contributed 18.1% of the GDP in 2019/2020. The manufacturing sector has therefore been a focus of the NDP and the contribution to GDP growth as shown below has years registered a 2% growth rate despite the significant growth of 4%.

3.0 NSA Statement on Annual Performance of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF) for the Financial Year 2019/20

A) Approving the key achievements during the FY 2019/20

The NSA recognizes the Government efforts, through MAAIF’s Partners and Stakeholders for the various achievements during the Financial Year 2019/2020. These achievements include;

- Launching of the MAAIF data center;
- Launching of the platform for registration and profiling of extension workers in collaboration with Uganda Fire Services and Agricultural Advisory Services.
- Launching of the national climate change strategy and the implementation of the Climate Change Master Plan for the period 2016 – 2026.
- Approval of the National Coffee Act, 2019
- Approval of the National Organic Agriculture Policy, 2019 for Uganda

B) Key emerging issues in the Agriculture Sector

The following are some of the emerging key challenges for agricultural sector in the financial year, 2019/20.

- The COVID-19 pandemic, locusts and other pests like the Army worm that increased the cost of production and food insecurity in some parts of the country especially in the Eastern and Northern regions.
- The unnecessary extension of the COVID-19 lockdown from 27.5 million persons in FY 2019/20 to 2020/21.
- The impacts of COVID on the agricultural performance and continued services delivery at different levels was evident with respect to food security and nutrition.
- The extra-ordinary action by the Government, especially at the Local Government level compulsion of overall service delivery through agriculture extension, fisheries and veterinary services extending services delivery to areas out of the implementation of the NDP II - one approach towards the achievement of the new National Development Plan III (NDP III).
- Delay in processes targeted at examination of the National Agricultural Extention Act which was due in 2019/2020 to support the implementation of the National Development Plan III (NDP III).
- The agricultural sector is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts based on the fact that Uganda is still natural resources dependent. Some of the key impacts such as prolonged droughts, floods due to climate changes, unprecedented increase in locusts, increased pest and diseases infestation are much more prevalent in some parts of the country. These certainly impact on productivity and associated economic activities at different scales. Much as agriculture at a micro level is still the biggest contributor to GHG emissions, it also presents opportunities for avoided emissions of GHGs and carbon storage in the soil through climate smart agricultural and bio-economic measures.

4. General recommendations by the NSA for consideration towards improving the Agriculture sector performance

The Office of the President should initiate and maintain an interagency forum to address areas consistently identified as bottlenecks and causes of delay in key policy and decision making processes. This forum will assist in the implementation of the Comprehensive Agricultural Development Plan (CADP), the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA), and development partners to identify and address required procedures, the process of approving and implementing programs, and necessary support to avoid unnecessary delays in implementing different policy activities.

The agricultural sector is the only sector which can contribute significantly to the transformation of the country leading to the future of industrialization, job creation and shared prosperity. Politicians should take a lead in persuading the general public of the benefits derived from the double-fronted contribution to household and national food security and income. The existing agriculture sector has revealed the need to further develop the sector.

The effort by Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries and its Partners is appreciated in imparting knowledge to the population on COVID-19. However, it’s important to strengthen coordination and related decision making frameworks to better enable the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Local Governments for avoidance of contradictions in respective policies and programmes promoting an environment that will support the execution of the current and future policies and programmes.

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