The Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC), members and secretariat hosted a Grain Stakeholders Meeting on 10th May 2018 at the Golf Course Hotel Kampala, Uganda.

The meeting was graced by Hon. Amelia Kyambadde, Minister of Trade Industry and Cooperatives, who was represented by Dr. Joshua Mutambi, the Commissioner Processing and Marketing. In attendance was also Dr. Ben Manyindo, the Executive Director, Uganda National Bureau of Standards, representatives from the USAID Mission, Representatives from Kenya High Commission, the Private Sector Foundation Uganda, Kilimo Trust, Ministry of East African Community Affairs, IITA and ASARECA.
1. Key Note Address by Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives

The Chief Guest Hon. Amelia Kyambadde, Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives represented by Dr. Joshua Mutambi, Commissioner Processing and Marketing ACKNOWLEDGED that regional trade in agricultural commodities and agro-industry development was critical for the socio-economic transformation of the East African Region. He ADDED, that Regional commodity trade offered significant economies of scale to support value addition, and that on the demand side, regional commodity trade promised greater access to markets and provided consumers with greater choices at more competitive prices.

- He INFORMED the stakeholders that significant growth had been registered in the agribusiness sub-sector which was attributed to the private sector including women and youth playing a key role in the development and investment in infrastructure.
- The Minister, through her representative, APPRECIATED the positive growth attained by EAGC over the last ten years despite the fact that Uganda’s private sector was still young and faced with numerous challenges. The Minister, noted that the government recognised the importance of institutions like EAGC and other member partners in developing the rural economy and the efforts which are vital in expanding productivity especially where you work with existing infrastructure.
- In the remarks, the Minister, through Dr. Mutambi, ACKNOWLEDGED the efforts, support and the good working relationships with development partners towards realising of the key objectives in the grain sector and appreciated aBi Trust for support given to EAGC. He also recognised the support by USAID, Sasakawa Global 2000 and others.
- In conclusion, the Minister, CALLED UPON the stakeholders to start maximising the earnings through processing products. This can only be achieved if we have adequate facilities to store these commodities in good condition and also ensure that producers and all stakeholders’ access financing to expand production and general capacity. This can be achieved through synergies from every stakeholder and more especially the financial sector.
2. Launch of the aBi Trust Project

Mr. Francis Chesang the Chief Operating Officer aBi Trust was represented by Ms. Prossy Tumushabe. Ms Prossy informed the meeting that the aBi Trust was jointly founded by the Uganda Government and Government of Denmark and focused on six value chains of Coffee, Oilseeds, Maize, Pulses, Horticulture and Dairy. She added that the key interventions by aBi trust included; addressing Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Post-Harvest Handling (PHH), Collective Marketing, Commercial seed production, Sanitary and Pyhto Sanitary and Quality Management and Entrepreneurship skills.

Ms. Prossy, HIGHLIGHTED that their partnership with EAGC focused on the pulses value chain and sought to Promote the Competitiveness of the Uganda Grain Export. She admitted that one of the key challenge in the sector was low quality of the grain being traded and this had affected the competitiveness of the export and thus low profitability to the entities engaged in trade. This is in addition to unstructured and unclear trade patterns, low adoption of EA Staple Food Standards, limited access to regional markets information and limited skills in grain quality management.

She NOTED that through the existing network built by EAGC that covered up to about 50,000 farmers, EAGC was well placed to work towards the mitigation of the challenges within the sector and commended EAGC for the interventions.

In conclusion, she POINTED out aBi Trust may not solve all the challenges that are within the sector and therefore CALLED UPON stakeholders to work towards addressing challenges within the sector especially at the farmer level during post-harvest handling.

3. Remarks from the Uganda representative on EAGC Board

Dr. Rose Omaria the Country Director EAGC INFORMED the stakeholders that the role of the Eastern Africa Grain Council was to deliver value and benefits to members including grain farmers or Producers (Small, Medium and Large), grain Traders, grain processors who formed the core membership of EAGC.
Dr. Omarias, ACKNOWLEDGED the support from members, the Board of Directors, development partners and EAGC secretariat. In addition, she LAUDED the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Trade Industry and Cooperatives, the Ministry of East Africa Community Affairs, Uganda National Bureau of Standards, Makerere University, NARO, District Local Governments, Private Sector Foundation Uganda and the World Food Programme for the existing collaboration and synergies that had been developed with EAGC over the years to support the Uganda’s grain sector.

She CALLED UPON EAGC members and stakeholders from both private and public sector to continue collaborating with the Council in shifting the institution’s focus towards institutional strengthening for the future survival and sustainability of the Council. “EAGC will heavily rely on evidence, ideas and leadership of its members and stakeholders to drive the policy agenda and position EAGC as the Leading Voice of the Grain Industry in Africa.”, She added.

4. Remarks from Key Stakeholders

Ms. Kasiva Mbithi the foreign Officer of the Kenya High Commission POINTED OUT the need for good statistics which would be key in trade decisions.

She INFORMED the stakeholders that a good example of lack of reliable statistics is the contract that had been signed between the Ugandan and Kenyan grains organizations, which is yet to be honoured due to the challenge of aggregating the volumes of required maize. She called upon EAGC to work closely with the commission and other Government Agencies to get key solutions to the challenges experienced in regional trade.

In his remarks, Dr. Ben Manyindo, the Executive Director Uganda National Bureau of Standards COMMENDED EAGC for interventions that have supported to structure the grain sector. Dr. Manyindo, INFORMED the meeting that UNBS had worked closely with EAGC on standards and Food Safety.

He URGED EAGC to focus on standards implementation at farm level in partnership with the existing extension officers. He further REITERATED that UNBS would continue to work with EAGC in promotion of standards, value addition and harmonization of standards at both regional and national level.
Passing a vote of thanks to the dignitaries and participants, Dr. Agnes Apea, appreciated the key partners and the secretariat and **COMMENDED** EAGC for creating a space and platform for members and stakeholders which builds towards a stronger representation in the EAC bloc with a goal of promoting and strengthening the grain value chain.

**MORE SPECIFICALLY** she extended her appreciation to aBi Trust for championing agribusiness in the country and for filling the critical areas in the grain value chain and the efforts.

She **PLEDGED** support as members to the council and thus called upon members to play their role as EAGC is membership based and thus need for members to leverage on the platform created by EAGC as this partnership will go a long way in improving trade.

### 5. Remarks from EAGC Secretariat

Mr. Gerald Masila the Executive Director EAGC appreciated the members and stakeholders for their presence at the meeting. He **POINTED OUT** that EAGC provided an opportunity for stakeholders to structure grain trade, build their skills, access market information and to engage in policy formulation for the benefit of the grain sector and individual businesses.
Mr. Masila further INFORMED the stakeholders that EAGC focused on policies both at national and regional level and thus further contributes to the continental and international level policy discussions and advocacy.

He FURTHER added that unstructured trade exposed the actors to risks and challenges from counter party default with no mechanism for arbitration. He added that some of these challenges had been addressed through promotion and facilitation of structured trade through systems like Business to Business linkages and a trading platform which reduces risks involved in trade. In addition, he noted that EAGC was working in partnership with companies that can provide lease financing solution and E-Trade finance fund for EAGC Members in the region.

He CALLED UPON stakeholders to take up the opportunities provided by EAGC along the value chain in creating business opportunities for its members, adding that EAGC was committed to facilitating trade across the region.

In her presentation, the Regional Program Coordinator Ms. Janet Ngombalu provided an insight into the EAGC regional perspective and the strategic focus for the next five years.

Ms. Ngombalu POINTED out that EAGC had over the last 10 years focused on putting in place core systems aimed at addressing its overall organizational mission to structure grain trade in the region.

She EMPHASIZED on EAGC’s focus on the Eastern Africa region as one block, with different agro ecological zones and that throughout out the year round there were countries with surplus grain while others were in deficit the need for regional trade.

She further HIGHLIGHTED EAGC’s shift in focus in the new EAGC Strategic Plan 2018-2022, which was more responsive to member needs and grain sector challenges. She AFFIRMED that in the new strategy EAGC would focus on facilitating more trade and better trade thus attaining the three major objectives of Institutional Strengthening and Sustainability, an Enabling Environment and Structured Trade.
In his presentation, the Country Programme Manager, Mr. Kiiza Kizito highlighted the progress EAGC had made over the past 8 years in its pursuit towards an efficient and organised grain industry.

He pointed out that Uganda majorly traded in Maize, Beans, Soybean, sorghum, rice, Millet, Green gram, peas, Barley and Sesame and major trade destinations include; Kenya, S. Sudan, Rwanda, DRC, Tanzania. Mr. Kizito, added that EAGC focused on a market led value chain approach and through several interventions had been able to reach to over 86,706 smallholder farmers who were direct beneficiaries of the EAGC services, including training in collective marketing, post-harvest handling and sensitisation on EA Staple food standards. He further affirmed that EAGC would continue to facilitate Market and financial linkages; access to Market information; Capacity building of chain actors and Advocacy for an enabling environment for Structured Grain Trade so as to promote competitiveness of Uganda’s Grain exports.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD**

The EAGC Members and stakeholders present recommended the following:

- Banks need to be trained on structured commodity financing in order to develop products that can fit into the business needs for grain sector mutual benefit.
- EAGC needs to continue promoting the implementation of grades and standards especially at farm level and requested EAGC to work closely with the extension officers who are recruited by the government.
- Requested EAGC to focus on value addition such that by 2022 the focus shifts from trade in grains to trade in grain products.
- Requested EAGC to concentrate on better data capture and credible statistics from the Grain Sector and for EAGC to use her programs and innovations to improve Uganda’s statistics eg establish production volumes for Rice and amount imported.
- Build partnership and collaboration with other organizations working in the Grain Sector, in promoting of grain trade in Uganda
- Given the interventions, EAGC was requested to focus on sustainability to increase the organisation’s financial independence in offering her services.
- EAGC to strengthen policy dialogue in the grain sector, especially on Rice trade at the national and regional level.
- Domesticate the gsoko trade platforms and EAS Standards to small holder farmers for increased trade.
- EAGC should become a one stop centre for all grain data and should focus on being the grain encyclopaedia and the “to go to” place on matters grain.
- Collaborate with metrological centre and provide key information on weather forecasts to grain stakeholders.
Figure 1 – The Commissioner – Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives

Figure 2 – The Executive Director Uganda National Bureau of Standards contributing during the plenary session

Figure 3: Official launch of the aBi Trust project

Figure 4: Handover of the EAGC contract by aBi Trust

Figure 5: Handover of certificate to our newest member

Figure 6. EAGC in Uganda Staff
PREAMBLE

The Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) is a membership-based organization representing the grain sector in Eastern and Southern Africa. The Council exists to facilitate efficient, structured, profitable and inclusive grain trade in its 10 mandate countries, namely Kenya (Regional Headquarters), Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi, Rwanda, Zambia, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

EAGC draws its membership from grain sector value chain actors in its Member States, which include farmers, traders and processors. Support service providers and complimentary sectors such as agro-input suppliers, financial services and animal feed manufacturers also form part of the Membership.

Since its inception in 2006 and later establishing an office in Uganda in 2009, there are a number of interventions through which EAGC has managed to serve her membership as well as the sector. In this respect, EAGC held a Grain Stakeholder’s Breakfast to provide an opportunity for the grain stakeholders and partners to review the EAGC grain sector interventions in Uganda and in the regional perspective as well as our Strategic Focus; 2018-2022. During the same meeting, EAGC Uganda also launched the recently signed aBi Trust Grant activity titled: **Promote the Competitiveness of the Grain Export in Uganda**, which is expected to go a long way in supporting EAGC to offer optimum stakeholders benefits.
For more information, please feel free to contact the EAGC Secretariat through the addresses below:

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