



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission for Social Development

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all**

#### **Statement submitted by Kikandwa Rural Communities Development Organization, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



## **Statement**

### **Promoting sustainable agricultural practices for economic empowerment among low-income communities in Mukono, Uganda**

#### **Introduction**

Uganda is classified as a least developed country. It is committed to transforming its economy and has shown this remarkably in its recent reports on progress in attaining the Millennium Development Goals. Most notably, it is halving the proportion of people below the poverty line, meaning that individuals below the poverty line are less poor today than in the past. In the progress report for 2013, it is noted that the need for swifter employment growth is one of the largest economic and social challenges facing Uganda. Population growth and improved educational attainment have resulted in high youth unemployment, with an estimated 600,000 to 700,000 people per year entering the labour market for the first time. A total of 5 per cent of the labour force have achieved higher educational qualifications than are required for their current job, with this percentage as high as 19 per cent in Kampala. The Minister of Finance, Maria Kiwanuka, noted that progress towards attaining the Goals relied heavily on the expansion of economic opportunities and that people needed to work. Full and productive employment for all will require faster expansion in the number of wage and salary jobs, as well as higher agricultural productivity, in order to release more workers from low-paid agricultural activities.

The objectives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of Uganda with regard to sector development include sustainably enhancing factor productivity (land, labour and capital) in crops, livestock and fisheries; developing and sustaining markets for primary and secondary agricultural products; and developing legal, policy and institutional frameworks that favour the private sector.

Food cultivation has historically been used as a punishment for misbehaviour at school in most less-developed countries. This has created a negative opinion of farming among many young people, who are resorting to other forms of employment. Consequently, interest in and understanding of local farming as a business has dropped drastically.

In the 2011/12 review of selected service delivery indicators for Mukono district, the report showed that, despite progress made in various areas, the level of service provision remained below the target. Only 14 of the target number of 28 agricultural service points and demonstration farms were achieved. The Government is extending agricultural support services to the farmers in the district, but the communities in Mukono seem to give rise to more challenges than success stories. Selected education indicators revealed a downward trend in the district, with statistics from the Uganda National Examinations Board revealing that, in 2012, the number of pupils who passed with a first grade was only 1.3 per cent, with most receiving second and third grades (48.5 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively). A considerable number (15.6 per cent) failed.

**Objective**

Our objective is to strengthen viable agricultural economic enterprises for low-income communities in Mukono by introducing and supporting modern poultry projects for the unemployed.

**Purpose**

Our purpose is to promote organic agricultural farming as a business practice for communities in Mukono, with a focus on schools. We believe that, when children are introduced to manageable agricultural income-generating activities such as poultry farming, they can benefit greatly, both financially and in terms of job creation and skills development.

**Overview of the issue**

We are a Ugandan non-governmental organization that was formed mainly to focus on the development of rural communities in the areas of skills development, modern sustainable agriculture, good health care, access to good sanitation and safe and clean water, user-friendly sustainable energy, information and communications technology for community development, advocacy and human rights promotion for self-empowerment.

We operate in Kikandwa, a village in Mukono. It is an area with various social and economic challenges that include but are not limited to lower literacy levels, a high unemployment rate, poor hygiene conditions, high poverty levels and abuses of the human rights of women and children through ritual traditional sacrificing.

We have raised the awareness of and trained various groups for women, young people and children and provided economic start-up kits in the fields of beekeeping and poultry farming, as well as educational materials, to some of those groups.

**Specific accomplishments**

In 2013, we:

- (a) Provided more than 1,500 pupils in poor schools in rural areas with educational materials;
- (b) Provided more than 500 elderly poor people in rural areas with basic domestic humanitarian aid;
- (c) Trained more than 100 pupils, school dropouts and jobless people in skills such as tailoring, carpentry and beekeeping;
- (d) Offered training to 30 non-governmental organizations in Mukono in practical and innovative blogging for development;
- (e) In partnership with a local organization, kick-started sustainable afforestation to promote education in poor primary schools in rural areas in Mukono;
- (f) Constructed three rainwater-harvesting tanks for three community schools in rural areas to help to provide clean water for handwashing after using the toilet and washing plates and cups after meals.

**A way forward: expectations and specific recommendations**

By strengthening the promotion of less labour-intensive, but high-yield, economic enterprises in developing countries, many unemployed people in low-income communities will be empowered to engage in sustainable employment that requires only determination rather than formal educational qualifications to be successful. Organic farming is an activity that will create sustainable employment for people in Uganda and we focus on poultry farming, goat farming and conservation agriculture, which are universally acceptable organic practices.

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