

# Experts urge govt to invest in agriculture

By Wilson Manishimwe

Experts have urged the Government to invest in the productive sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing and co-operatives so as to grow the GDP per capita of the country from the current \$615.3.

They said heavy investment in productive sectors will create jobs, enhance growth of tax base, hence economically transforming the country. They made the remarks during the consultative workshop on the National Development Planning that took at Imperial Hotel on Thursday. The workshop was organised by the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC).

According to Paul Okitol, the manager strategic planning at the National Planning Authority (NPA), Uganda's GDP per capita has only doubled from \$300 since 1962. However, he attributed the slow growth to the wars that marred the country, especially during the change of leaders.

"Whereas we had a strong base and foundation during the 1960s, along the way, in 1970s, we experienced turmoil that is the time when Uganda was

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involved in civil war and, therefore, the entire economy was destroyed," he stated.

He added: "From the 1987, that is when the construction of the economy came in and we now started again to re-focus on improving the per capita levels of Uganda.

However, again, during that time, we focused on particular policies that were not holistic in nature and at the same time, such policies did not lay any foundation

to enable the country position itself to grow well and increase the incomes."

Paul Lakuma, the Research Fellow in the Macroeconomics Department at EPRC, noted that Uganda has experienced macroeconomic stability, but with deterioration of social service provision due to high population rate, slow progress in expanding tax base and technical inefficiency in public spending.

"There has been significant reduction in income poverty with regional variations but limited progress in terms of non-monetary poverty indicators. The country has for over decades seen limited descent job creation; growth not broad based and limited structural transformation," he explained.

Robert Bataringaya, an official at the Ministry of Public Service noted that while planning, the Government puts little attention to analyse and consider what is involved the National Development Plan (NDP) for the country.

He said it has resulted to the failure by the Government to meet the targets included in the NDP.

"We need to look at ways of reducing unemployment and stimulating growth and development," Bataringaya said.