

Without these interventions, the average harvest. The district Tengei said in Nakapiripirit town unpredictable these days.

Gen. Ali blames extension workers for poor crop yields

ADJUMANI

By John Unzima

The First Deputy Prime Minister, Gen. Moses Ali, has blamed extension workers for the shrinking agricultural production in rural Uganda.

He made the remarks while leading officials of Riela International, a German firm specialising in post-harvest technology in agriculture, on a tour of northern Uganda.

Gen. Ali said the extension workers are trained using taxpayers' money to help rural farmers but instead, they sit back and enjoy the comfort of their offices.

"People are interested in farming on a large scale but the people with the degrees (in agriculture) are not helping them," Ali said.

He also said this is worsened by laziness among the people and a poor attitude towards agricultural

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work in most parts of northern Uganda, especially West Nile.

"You employ somebody today on your farm, tomorrow he says his uncle is dead and they are going for funeral. I am now afraid of employing people



Gen. Moses Ali

because their uncles will die," Ali said, referring to people using funerals as an excuse to dodge farm work.

The state minister for northern Uganda, Grace Kiwucwiny, said the attitude of the people must

be changed in order to increase production in the country.

Kiwucwiny said since the Government is committed to improving markets, people should make use of such facilities.

The minister also urged people in the northern region to desist from farming for only subsistence purposes and use the opportunity of the interaction with the German farmers to analyse how post-harvest management of crops can be improved.

Better structures

In Adjumani district, vendors in Awindiri Market demanded an improved market facility for their products.

The vendors stopped the team of ministers and MPs, asking them to consider their plight, saying they needed a modern market for their merchandise.

Grace Limio, one of the vendors,

said: "We need a proper market so that we can store our products and ensure that they are hygienic."

Nasur Naima, another vendor in Awindiri Market, said they keep shifting their merchandise from home to the market on a daily basis for lack of storage facilities.

In response, Ali said the visiting Germans would advise on marketing and how to improve storage facilities for the produce of rural farmers.

"As we saw in the market, the handling of products is not good. It is as if the customers are served rubbish," the premier who also hails from West Nile, said.

Riela International founder Karl Heinz Knoop said post-harvest technology improvement was key in determining the price a farmer fetches for their produce.

"The idea of keeping produce in sacks is an old technology that must be improved," Knoop said.