

NAADS fails to pay Kisoro tea farmers

By Wilson Mankishimwe

Tea farmers in Kisoro District have cried out to the government to intervene and compel the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) to pay them for the tea seedlings they supplied early last year.

They said the Government released some money, but NAADS officials selected a few of them and paid them in November and December 2016. Over sh7b was paid to 67 farmers who had supplied tea seedlings in March and September 2015, they said.

They also claimed that they had been informed by the district authorities that payment for those who supplied the tea seedlings in September last year was being processed but not those who supplied in March last year.

"We who supplied in March last year, have neither been paid nor mentioned anywhere in the government payment plans," one of the farmers said.

The farmers also accused some local politicians of using the Kisoro-based radio stations to spread misinformation that all the farmers were paid, knowing well it is not true.

Benjamin Akankwasa, one of the affected farmers told the *New Vision* that some of them risk losing millions of shillings some of which was borrowed. He said their children also risk not reporting to school since the money they were supposed to use for school fees is tied up in the NAADS projects.

"I am stranded. I do not know what to do. I invested in tea farming hoping to reap big, but only to end up with nothing," said Akankwasa who has five hectares of tea in Nyabwishenya sub-county.

Akankwasa said there are over 100 farmers who have been left out.

He also said some of the affected farmers include the Kirundo sub-county LC5 chairman John Tumuhirwe, and Susan Rwaretse (one of Kisoro's model farmers).

Akankwasa added that some of his colleagues have been arrested due to the accumulation of bank loans that they acquired while planting tea.

Tumuhirwe said he had expected to be paid, but was told that the phase in which supplied his tea seedlings had been skipped.

He also said the Government should sort out issues concerning delayed and irregular payments of farmers.

Kisoro tea factory project

The Kisoro municipality Northern division town clerk, Fred Kalorero, said the tea factory in the district is almost complete. He however, said there is a problem of firewood used in the factory during processing. He noted that much as leaders mobilised residents to engage in tea growing, there were less or no efforts to encourage tree planting to provide fire wood to the tea factory.

The tea factory is being established in Nyakabande sub-county by the executive director of Kigezi High Land Tea Company, James Musinguzi Garuga.

"It is high time the leaders started urging people to plant trees to provide fire wood," Kalorero said. He also said there are large expanses of uncultivated land in the northern parts of the district which he said are ideal for tree planting.

Efforts to get a comment from the Kisoro district chief

administrative officer, Wilson Tibugyenda, were futile by press time.

Bufumbira North MP Kamara speaks out

John Nizeyimana Kamara, a tea farmer and the Bufumbira North MP, confirmed that the farmers demand sh3.7b from government for the 8.3 million tea seedlings supplied in the months of March and September last year. He also



Kamara

confirmed claims that a section of the farmers have been skipped in the payment plans. He, however said, the problem has been sorted out and that they will be paid.

"I talked to the Prime Minister, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, NAADS secretariat and the concerned ministries about the issue and I am sure that no tea farmer will be left out in payments," Kamara said.

"Extension workers in

conjunction with some politicians have continuously mobilised farmers on better way of planting tea such as tea spacing and planting during rainy season," Kamara said.

He said there is progress on the tea project in Kisoro and urged more farmers to come on board and get involved in the lucrative activity. Kamara is one of the farmers that were recently paid for supplying of tea seedlings.

BANK OF UGANDA



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CLARIFICATION ON BANK OF UGANDA'S OWNERSHIP OF PLOTS 15-17 BIRCH AVENUE, MASAKA MUNICIPALITY

KAMPALA – Wednesday January 4, 2017 KAMPALA – The Management of Bank of Uganda has taken notice of the recent media reports alleging that the Bank and / or some of its officials are attempting to develop land that was illegally parceled out of land reserved for a golfing sports arena in Masaka Municipality.

The Bank of Uganda wishes to clarify as follows:

1. The Bank of Uganda acquired the said land from the then registered lease owner in 2006;
2. The previous owner had acquired a lease from the Municipal Council in 1995 following the re-planning of Masaka Municipality after the 1979 war. In 2001, this lease was renewed by Masaka District Land Board;
3. The Bank is now the lawful and registered proprietor of the land with a valid Certificate of Title.
4. Issues of ownership of this property were investigated by the Inspector General of Government who concluded that the property is lawfully owned by the Bank of Uganda.
5. Following the approval of its development plans by Masaka Municipality, the Bank of Uganda has embarked on the process of developing the property as BoU Currency Centre for Masaka.

We urge all stakeholders to obtain the right information which is available in the Lands Office and support the Bank in this development effort.

MANAGEMENT

Wednesday January 4, 2017



The Kisoro tea farmers who supplied tea seedlings to the Government are demanding sh3.7b