

Fight for agriculture, Kadaga tells farmers

UWJA

By Jackie Nambogga

The Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, has asked the public to lobby their MPs to ensure that the budget allocation towards agriculture is prioritised.

"I support the public, especially the youth to keep harassing Parliament to ensure that the budget goes where it is supposed to go," she said.

According to Kadaga, she has on several occasions quarrelled with officials from the finance ministry over the meagre resources allocated to agriculture.

"If you knew the number of times we have quarrelled over that matter, sometimes I think I should not give them the money for their projects," Kadaga remarked.

This was during her visit to the 25th National Agricultural Exhibition in Jinja on Saturday.

Agriculture underfunded

Kadaga said it was frustrating to keep saying that agriculture is Uganda's backbone when the ministry is underfunded.

"How much do we supervise it?" she asked.

According to Robert Miggadde, the deputy chairperson of the parliamentary committee on



Kadaga at the Uganda Prisons stall during the exhibition on Saturday. Photo by Jackie Nambogga

agriculture, they had requested for 10% of the national budget, which was reduced to 3%.

Miggadde said even the 3% was not realised because the

funding represents 2.7%.

However, Kadaga promised to ensure that they deduct some money from that of the finance ministry and allocate it

to agriculture, sending farmers into ululations.

Train the youth

She urged the Uganda National

Kadaga promised to ensure that they cut some funds from the finance ministry and put it in agriculture

Farmers Federation to team up with the agriculture ministry to ensure that they train youth in growing tree seedlings.

She cited one of her legislators, Elly Tumwine, who she said harvests big from tree seedlings.

"You need to encourage young people to make money out of trees; one of my colleagues is rich he is a tree farmer. He sells seedlings and makes a lot money," she noted.

Once engaged in such activities, Kadaga said this will restrain the youth from burdening their parents and guardians over basic scholastic materials.

"I want you to assist us to train the young people to make money so that they do not have to ask their parents and guardians for basic scholastic materials," she said.

Demonstration farms

Kadaga observed the need by UNFFE to put demonstration

gardens at sub-county level, where LC1 chairpersons can be sensitised on agriculture, who will in turn convey the knowledge and skills to residents.

"I know people who eat *embooli* (sweet potatoes) with no vegetables and I keep wondering why women cannot grow vegetables. But supposing we had a demonstration farm at the sub-county, our women would not go without sauce," she said.

However, Kadaga was impressed by the quality of innovation and technology showcased at the annual event.

She vowed to encourage fellow legislators to mobilise groups from different sub-counties to attend this annual event in order to learn more and improve their lives.

Kadaga promised to market the furniture exhibited by the Uganda Prisons Force under the Buy Uganda, Build Uganda slogan.