

UEPB to intensify agriculture exports, says board chairman

By Prossy Nandudu

The Uganda Export promotion Board (UEPB) is to intensify capacity building for producer and farmer groups so as to increase the exports.

This is part of the board's three-year action plan, which is in line with the National Development Plan II. Under this plan, priority is into agricultural products, which include fruits, vegetables and flowers, maize, beans and rice, coffee, cocoa, tea and oil seeds like sesame, soy beans, sunflower and palm oil, among others.

This was revealed by the UEPB board chair, **Nimrod Waniala** in an interview with the *New vision*.

Why focus on agriculture?

Waniala said attention is on the agricultural sector, mainly dominated by smallholder farmers and is faced with challenges such as middlemen



Nimrod Waniala

who cheat farmers, weather changes as seen through floods, drought, pests and diseases, poor storage facilities, poor roads, among others, which affect production and quality of products for export.

He adds that by training farmers along the value chain, they will be in position to make a decision as a group and decide on, for example, price for their commodity or go for a common storage facility.

Waniala explained that the training programme is aimed at preparing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to become export-ready for both value-

added products and service export companies.

He, however, noted that the board is in need of funds and more staff and a robust information and communication technology system that will help in collecting market information among others, so as to carry out their mandate adequately.

What govt should do

To address the above challenge, Waniala wants government to increase investments in the export infrastructure that will ensure smooth movement of exports and quality standards and certification.

He added that much as government has been investing more in infrastructure, the development of exports requires more investment in the export infrastructure.

This includes quality control and management, facilities (International Accredited laboratories and Phyto sanitary certification and inspection facilities, cold chain storage facilities and storage facilities for grains.