

THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A CENTRE OF AGROSTUDIES IN THE COUNTRY WAS DISCUSSED

First Lady roots for Israeli trainers to boost skills development in Uganda

By Vision Reporter

The First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs. Janet Museveni, plans to get Israeli experts to help train trainers for the Skilling Uganda programme.

"I want to connect with trainers from Israel, who have the expertise and positive mindset, to come and train trainers for our many vocational institutions, and these will in turn impart skills and motivate our young people," she said in a meeting held with officials from Agrostudies who called on her on Thursday at State House Nakasero in Kampala.

The officials from Agrostudies, an agricultural capacity building organisation in Israel, included the chief executive officer, Yaron Tamir and the chief operations officer, Inbal Shoval. They were accompanied by the Agrostudies regional co-ordinator, Isa Agaba Mugabo; the chairperson of Makerere University Council, Engineer Dr. Charles Wana Etyem and Thomas Tayebwa, a member of the Makerere University Council.

According to a release from her office, Mrs. Museveni said she believes the skills that the Israeli people have, come from God as seen in the Bible and Uganda has a lot to learn from these people who have managed to turn around their barren dry land into an area of fruit production for export.

She said she feels sad when Uganda keeps importing experts to work in areas,



First Lady and education minister Janet Museveni shows Tamir and Shoval a picture showing Uganda and Israel's co-operation last week. PPU photo

such as road construction and oil and gas, yet the youth are unemployed. She added that what Uganda needs in this season is to add value to education by training the hands to work and hence making the cycle of education

complete.

"We are focusing on skills development and we look at Agrostudies as a skills development project. We hope that the young people who undergo the one-year agricultural skills

apprenticeship with the Agrostudies Training Centre in Israel can pass on the skills to their peers when they come back home," she said.

The Agrostudies' officials and Mrs. Museveni discussed the possibility of establishing a

centre in Uganda, where the beneficiaries of the Agrostudies programme can converge and put into practice their knowledge and skills. This would also be a demonstration farm, where even those who have not been to Israel would

be able to benefit from Israeli skills and technology, such as drip irrigation, post-harvest handling and maintaining international standards.

A total of 675 graduates from various higher institutions of learning have since 2013 benefited from a one-year life-changing apprenticeship programme at the Agrostudies Training Centre, which enables them to get hands-on training skills and exposure to modern farming methods in horticulture, crop and animal agriculture. The students who also go through a social attitude and mindset transformation, come ready to become youth cadres of agricultural transformation and job-creation through commercial agriculture production, agroprocessing and innovations.

Tamir said out of the 12 African countries participating in the Israel Agrostudies apprenticeship programme, Uganda has had the largest number of beneficiary students.

He explained that on return to Uganda after one year, the students have capital accrued from their savings, knowledge and the right attitude to start their own agribusinesses.

Etyem promised to explore utilising some of the university's redundant land at Kabanyoro Farm in Wakiso district to set up such a centre. He said this can also be scaled up by each participating institution setting up its own demonstration farm to enable many more Ugandans benefit from the Agrostudies skills and technologies.