

Q&A FOOD SYSTEMS

In this interview, Alice Ruhweza, the president of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), shared insights on her personal journey, Africa's food systems and AGRA's strategy with *New Vision's* Aloysious Kasoma.

Q What inspired your passion for agriculture and development?

A My journey is deeply personal. My father, Sylvester Uweza, was

AGRA PRESIDENT ALICE RUHWEZA ON FOOD SYSTEMS AND AFRICA'S FUTURE



ALICE RUHWEZA
AGRA PRESIDENT

Uganda's first post-colonial head of national parks. When he left his job in 1976 over concerns about ivory trade, he turned to smallholder farming in Fort Portal. That farm educated all of us. It showed me the power of a farmer. Across Africa, many families

depend on smallholder farming for survival and opportunity. That is why AGRA's mission, to move farmers from struggle to thriving businesses, resonates with me.

How has your professional background shaped your leadership?

I spent about two decades in conservation, working with institutions like the United Nations Development Programme and World Wildlife Fund. I learnt that we cannot solve climate change or biodiversity loss without fixing food systems. Agriculture is central, it affects emissions, water use and land use. That realisation brought me to AGRA.

What is your top priority as AGRA president?

We must reposition agriculture as a connector. It is not just about food production, it links to health, nutrition, climate, energy and jobs. For too

long, we have worked in silos. We need to bring together governments, private sector and civil society to treat agriculture as a system that drives development.

With a rapidly growing population, is Africa at risk or advantage?

It is both, but mainly an opportunity. Africa's youth population is a demographic dividend. However, we must invest in skills, finance and access to land for young people to become entrepreneurs in agriculture. Without that, unemployment could become a source of instability.

How is AGRA adapting to food security challenges and climate change?

Our strategy has evolved. We started with seeds, but quickly realised seeds alone were not enough. We need healthy soils, access to fertilisers, extension services and

climate-resilient crops. We have also expanded into markets and policy since farmers need reliable buyers and supportive frameworks to thrive.

What does success look like for AGRA in the next decade?

First, agriculture must attract private investment; it has to become a bankable sector. Second, farmers must earn more. Productivity alone is not enough; we must increase incomes. Third, we must connect agriculture to climate, health, and economic systems. And finally, we should harness both modern technology and traditional knowledge.

What gives you hope about Africa's agricultural future?

Innovation. Digital platforms, AI-driven extension services and better market linkages are transforming agriculture. If we combine these with strong policies and investment, Africa can feed itself and prosper.