

Israeli diplomas

Investment

Transformation

Ugandans graduate in agrostudies

By Vision Reporter

A total of 215 students from 12 institutions in Uganda have been awarded diplomas. This was during a function where 1,200 students from eight countries in Africa and Asia graduated at the 2016/2017 11-month agricultural on-the-job training apprenticeship under the Israel AgroStudies Capacity Building for developing countries.

The life-changing apprenticeship programme at the AgroStudies Training Centre enables students to get hands-on training skills and exposes them to modern farming methods in horticulture, crop and animal agriculture. The students, who also go through a social attitude and mindset transformation, come out ready to become youth cadres for agricultural transformation and job-creation through commercial agriculture production, agro-processing and innovations.

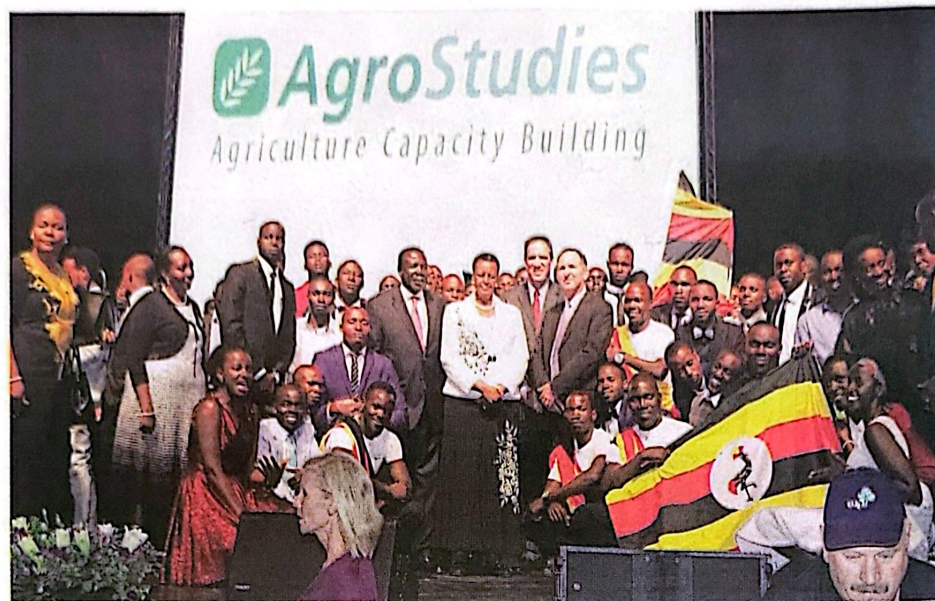
This is the fourth cohort of Ugandan students, bringing to a total of 675 who have benefited from the training since Uganda entered into a partnership with Israel in 2013.

Guest of honour

The First Lady and education minister, Mrs Janet Museveni, handed over the diploma certificates to the 215 Ugandan students at a graduation ceremony held at Binyenei HaUma International Convention Centre in Jerusalem on Sunday, where she was guest of honour.

Mrs Museveni congratulated the graduands and urged them to work hard, build discipline and put to good use the skills acquired from the apprenticeship programme as a multiplier effect in the communities in their respective countries so as to bring about tangible transformation.

"Remember to whom much



Mrs. Museveni (centre) with Israeli officials and some of the Ugandan students who had just been awarded diplomas from the AgroStudies on completion of the 11-month agricultural on-the-job training apprenticeship

is given, much is required as the parable of the talents in Matthew chapter 25 clearly illustrates."

"I am confident that our returning students will be ambassadors for socio-economic transformation through education and skills enhancement to Uganda's agriculture sector," she added.

A release from the minister's office stated that Mrs. Museveni appealed to Ugandan universities to establish demonstration farms for the returning interns to use to set up model facilities for communities and other institutions to emulate.

The First Lady, who in her speech referred to books in the Bible's Old Testament, said: "When we talk about agrostudies and agricultural skills, what comes to my mind

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is the ancient biblical story of Joseph, the Jewish boy who was a dreamer. Through his many skills, including agriculture in that day and time, he not only saved one country where he was living as a slave initially and then as prime minister, but also saved the earth from monumental famine."

She, therefore, suggested that the agrostudies apprenticeship programme be named the Joseph Project.

"What we learn from this perspective is that the world needs to as much as possible break the barriers that create

tension which minimises the great results that could be got when our hands are put together to create a global village. Many times, we have played lip-service and talked so much about the idea of a global village and yet we continue to close the doors that honest co-operation could very easily bring to our world," she explained.

She called on universities and colleges in Africa to spearhead reform and transformation of agricultural education and training so as to produce the young 'Josephs' across Africa

who will graduate with real and gainful business and entrepreneurship know-how.

Mrs. Museveni said Uganda's education ministry's current focus is on skills development because it recognises the need for skills training for its young population.

She observed that Israel has many lessons such as endurance, a national work ethic and skills development that Ugandans can learn from.

Cordial relations

Mrs Museveni also hailed the long-standing relationship with Israel and appreciated the support Israel has extended to Uganda over many years. She pledged Uganda's commitment to strengthening its collaboration with Israel. She also hoped for continued partnership with the Israel

Government Agency for International Development Co-operation (MASHAV) and AgroStudies International Centre for Agriculture.

The head of MASHAV, Gil Haskel, said Israel was proud to share its technology with anyone in order to develop an environment of technological agriculture that will be able to feed every single person without the need for conflict and war over the limited resources on the planet. "Without a breakthrough in technological agriculture and technological water harvesting, we will not be able to collectively achieve the goal of feeding the estimated 10 billion people by 2050," Haskel said.

Graduands tipped

The chief executive officer AgroStudies, Yaron Tamir, said the 2016/2017 class is the 12th to graduate and joins the over 7,000 who have so far been passed out by the AgroStudies programmes since it started.

Tamir urged the graduands to commit to invest in the agricultural transformation of their world and ensure food security in their respective countries.

He also encouraged them to use their savings to open agricultural businesses in their countries instead of squandering it on luxurious living.

He advised them to always be innovative and never to be afraid to fail. He also reminded them that they are the bridge between Israel and their respective countries.

Hilda Amutaheire, who spoke on behalf of the graduands, said since they graduated with hands-on skills they must now be the change-makers and pledged to translate the knowledge and skills, they had acquired into ending hunger for humanity and ensuring food security.