

BY ANTHONY WESAKA

KAMPALA. Uganda has intensified efforts to attract Chinese investment in its agriculture sector, leveraging a high-level forum in Hunan Province to showcase untapped potential and push for value addition and export growth.

The Uganda-China (Changsha) Agricultural Trade and Investment Forum, convened by the Embassy of Uganda in China, brought together government officials, investors, and business leaders under the theme "Cultivating partnerships for prosperity." The meeting focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation, particularly with Hunan Province, highlighting agro-industrialisation, technology transfer, and trade expansion.

Uganda's Ambassador to China Oliver Wonekha said the forum comes at a critical time following Beijing's zero-tariff policy on a range of African exports, including those from Uganda.

"The zero-tariff arrangement provides a pathway for Uganda to move beyond

Uganda courts Chinese investors to boost agro-exports

raw exports and into agro-processing, enabling the country to earn more from its agricultural products," she said, noting that the policy gives Ugandan producers a competitive edge in accessing China's vast market while promoting value addition.

Officials said the forum builds on growing diplomatic and economic ties between Kampala and Beijing, reinforced through sustained engagement with Hunan provincial authorities.

Ambassador Henry Mayega, the head of International Economic Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said Uganda is positioning itself as a stable and open partner for Chinese investors.

"Uganda comes with a simple message — we are stable, reforming and open for partnerships built on industrialisation, technology transfer and trade facilitation," he said.

He highlighted the country's youth-

ful workforce, expanding manufacturing base, and strategic access to regional

THE OPPORTUNITIES

The government is highlighting a range of investment opportunities, including modern inputs, irrigation, improved seed systems, agro-processing, cold chain logistics, and agricultural mechanisation, aimed at boosting productivity and efficiency across the sector. To attract investors, Uganda offers a series of incentives such as tax holidays, VAT relief on machinery and seeds, and streamlined services through the Uganda Investment Authority.

markets through the East African Community and the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Agriculture remains central to Uganda's pitch, employing about two-thirds of the population and contributing roughly a quarter of GDP. Yet officials noted that only about a third of the country's arable land is under cultivation.

"That gap is an opportunity for investment in modern inputs, irrigation, seed systems, agro-processing, and logistics," Mr Mayega said.

The government has introduced incentives to attract investors, including tax holidays for qualifying projects, VAT relief on machinery and seeds, and services offered through the Uganda Investment Authority's One-Stop Centre.

Key sectors highlighted at the forum included agro-processing and value addition, agricultural mechanisation, cold

chain logistics, tourism, mineral development, and innovation in science and technology.

The forum aligns with Uganda's National Development Plan IV and the government's ATMS strategy, which prioritises agro-industrialisation, tourism, minerals, and science and technology as drivers of economic growth.

Officials said the engagement is expected to boost exports of Ugandan agricultural products to China, facilitate partnerships between Ugandan and Chinese firms, and advance investor projects such as the proposed Uganda Hunan Industrial Park.

The event attracted senior officials from the Hunan Provincial Government, as well as investors and business leaders from agriculture, manufacturing, and logistics, signalling growing interest in Uganda as an investment destination.