PHOTO BY FREDERICK KIWANUKA



Mubaje with UMSC officials during the launch of the halal farmers' centres project in Luwero yesterday

UMSC TO ESTABLISH 87 HALAAL FARMERS' CENTRES NATIONWIDE

By Frederick Kiwanuka

The Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) has launched a multi-million-shilling project aimed at establishing halaal farmers' centres in all the 87 Muslim districts across the country.

The initiative was officially commissioned by the Mufti of Uganda, Shaban Mubaje, with the first centre being launched in Luwero district.

The centres are intended to help farmers access genuine agricultural inputs at affordable prices, eliminate counterfeit products on the market and promote modern farming practices that can improve productivity and generate sustainable incomes.

Under the arrangement, UMSC has partnered with Matugga Industries and Logistics Hub Ltd, an agro-input company, that will finance, stock and operate the centres. The company will also provide farmers with technical knowledge and support to improve agricultural production.

UMSC, on the other hand, will mobilise communities and promote the programme through its existing structures across the country, with the aim of boosting agricultural productivity and improving household incomes.

While commissioning the Luwero centre last week, Mubaje said the establishment of halaal farmers' centres is part of UMSC's broader effort to support government initiatives aimed at social and economic transformation in the 87 Muslim districts.

He called upon kadhis and other Muslim leaders to embrace the initiative by mobilising the faithful to participate, adopt modern farming techniques and establish demonstration farms on idle land belonging to UMSC.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The mufti also encouraged kadhis to promote community participation in government poverty alleviation programmes and urged imams to register with savings and credit co-operative societies.

Mubaje further reiterated his call for unity among Muslims in Uganda, urging them to set aside their differences and work together to improve their livelihoods.

He also criticised the growing trend of Ugandans travelling abroad in search of casual jobs, particularly in the Middle East where many workers reportedly face harsh and inhumane conditions.

"It is true Uganda is still having many problems, but we are better off than many other countries I have visited," he said.

Abdul Razak Arinda, the UMSC deputy secretary general in charge of planning and development and the focal person for the halaal farmers' centre project, said the programme will gradually be rolled out to all Muslim districts across the country.

He added that in addition to the halaal agro-input shops, UMSC plans to establish demonstration farms and deploy agricultural professionals who will guide farmers on modern farming methods.