

Private sector calls for practical research

By John Odyek

Entrepreneurs have asked academic researchers to come up with practical research information that can guide businesses in Uganda. They said there is a gap between research in business related areas and the private sector that needs to consume it.

The entrepreneurs made the call during a conference held at the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC), Makerere University under the theme, *How can the private sector harness research in creating wealth and development in Uganda*. The conference was organised recently by the EPRC.

Allan Ssenyodwa, the head of project on higher education, technology and policy analysts from Uganda Manufacturers Association said many business operators need research

Issues of research

- The cost of doing business
- Interest rates
- Challenges of real estate business
- Challenges of small-medium size enterprises

information, which was not available in large supply.

"The private sector that needs information is big and does not get it. The researchers producing it are few. Research should help the private sector become more productive, create wealth and development," Ssenyodwa explained.

He said due to inadequate information and communication

between the private and public sectors, the public sector today thinks poverty was declining, while the private sector sees it as rising. He said such discrepancy in information has an impact on policies produced by the Government.

"There is a perception that research generalises issues and researchers are focused at the macro level, yet the problems faced are at a micro level, at firm or individual level. Kenya invested in researching on AGOA to enable their citizens participate and now they lead in textile export in East Africa," he added.

Uganda National Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (UNCCI) head of policy research and advocacy, Ezra Rubanda, said research institutions such as the EPRC are seen as intellectual, doing work that does not link to the



Entrepreneurs at the conference called for the need to increase research in real estate so that solutions for the challenges faced in the sector can be found

private sector.

Rubanda proposed that deeper research should be done on issues like the cost of doing business, interest rates taxes and challenges in real estate, challenges of small-medium size enterprise regulation, how they affect the private sector and suggestions on practical solutions to them.

In addition, it should be done on various government policies that affect the private sector and how the policies could be made better to improve the business environment.

"Research should also be done on business opportunities and on the models that can be used to exploit them," Rubanda added.

Mark Rutaro, a private sector researcher and consultant, called on EPRC to come up with disruptive research that looks at situations contrary to what politicians and leaders believe and think.

There is a gap between research in business related areas and the private sector that researchers need to look into

For instance, Rutaro said, research could show that government investing in tourism and agriculture would be more rewarding than investment in the oil and gas industry.

Roland Agaba, who works in the coffee industry said researchers need to prove that Ugandans were losing nine dollars out of 10 dollars for every cup of coffee sipped in

Europe.

In a speech read on her behalf by Dr Ibrahim Kasirye, a principal research officer for EPRC during the opening of the conference, EPRC executive director Sarah Ssewanyana noted that Uganda's economy depends a lot on the operations of the private sector.

"It is evident the roles that used to be solely performed by the public sector are now being shared or even performed exclusively by the private sector," Ssewanyana stated.

"EPRC is well placed to provide evidence based knowledge and applied policy analysis on a variety of issues affecting the country. There is need to discuss priorities to ensure relevant research is conducted and solutions to existing gaps is identified to support the private sector," Ssewanyana stated in the speech.



Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association Limited

A Wealthy Woman A Wealthy Nation

UWEAL House, UMA Showgrounds P.O Box 10002, Kampala
Tel: 0703475537/0778608054 Email: uweal@uweal.co.ug

NOTICE FOR THE 2017 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association Limited (UWEAL) hereby informs its Members and the General Public that the Association will hold its Annual General Meeting on:

Date: Saturday, 28th January, 2017
Time: 09:00am - 05:00pm
Venue: UWEAL Grounds, Namanve

AGENDA

1. Prayer
2. Confirmation of Quorum
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Review and Adoption of Previous Minutes and Matters Arising
5. Presentation of the Chairperson's Report
6. Presentation of the Management Report
7. Presentation of the Treasurer's Report and Audited Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December, 2016
8. Presentation of the 2017 Work Plan & Budget
9. Registered AOB
10. Close

Please confirm your participation with UWEAL on Tel: 0774905280 / 0778608054 or via Email: uweal@uweal.co.ug, aokia@uweal.co.ug, ebaguma@uweal.co.ug

Angela Bageine
SECRETARY GENERAL