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Bulkwe farmers group show their cassava chipper machine at a recent event to celebrate Sasakawa's 30 years of existence. The group is one of the beneficiaries of Sasakawa's activities. PHOTO BY DENIS EDEMA

# Sasakawa Africa celebrates milestone

Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) marked 30 years of existence with a conference to review their performance over the past five years and setting strategy for 2017-2021.

Juliana Rwelamira, the SAA managing director, said the organisation has been working to reduce poverty and malnutrition and improve lives of smallholder farmers without jeopardising the environment.

"Our major focus was to increase production and productivity of cereal crops such as maize, sorghum and rice. However, over the years farmers got bumper harvests which made us look at the entire production chain," she added.

This is to enable the smallholder farmers capture a larger proportion of the economic benefits in the value chains and create public-private partnerships that financially support delivery of extension services.

"We strengthen agricultural extension systems by building capacity of extension professionals and smallholder farmers to accelerate agricultural productivity and establish systems that enable adaptation of technologies and improve efficiency," she said.

However, she said their activities are affected by factors beyond their control such as droughts, floods and diseases and called upon government to invest more to make their initiatives successful.

"Government should raise money to invest in agriculture so that our initiatives are scaled up to

the entire country because we cannot have all the resources to cover the entire country," she said.

In her remarks, Roselline Nyamutale the SAA country director, said since its inception in Uganda, the organisation has led to increased production by 40 per cent, enabled 60 per cent of the households have food security and left 60 per cent of the households with increased incomes.

"In our 2017/2021 strategy, we shall continue to develop capacity of farmers and extension workers and teach them to look at farming as business to enable the country achieve the middle income status," she added.

Nyamutale also revealed that SAA will also focus on promoting climate-resilient technologies, promote irrigation and take quality grains to the farmers to help them put food on the table.

SAA and its Sasakawa Group 2000 country programmes, work in collaboration with national agricultural extension services. They aim at improving their operational activities and strengthening abilities of their front-line staff.

They also establish cost-effective farmer learning platforms that improve productivity in smallholder food systems, especially for resource poor women farmers and those with low level technical efficiency, and increase food security and livelihoods in four African countries, including Uganda, Mali, Nigeria and Ethiopia.

-Joseph Bah

## did you know?

Though urine is perceived as a waste because of what its composition, it is a product of essential nutrient!