

THE EAST AFRICAN - UNITED STATES (EA - US) BASED HARMONIZATION OF STANDARDS STUDY TOUR (11th - 27th August, 2000) REPORT

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Introduction

The United States (US) government is making deliberate effort to harmonize Agricultural Standards and improve transportation in the East African Sub-region as a means of improving trade within the East African Community (EAC) and with the US.

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In September, 1999, USAID/Africa Bureau's Africa Trade and Investment Policy (ATRIP) programme provided United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Foreign Service/International Cooperation and Development/Food Industries Division/Professional Development Programme (PDP) with funding to conduct a series of inter-related activities for the East African Sub-region (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda). The activities were proposed in accordance with ATRIP's objectives:

- a) Helping African Private and Public Sector Partners design and Implement Policy reforms that will make African countries attractive to International trade and investment.
- b) Assisting policy makers in improving regional transportation management.
- c) Developing a common set of Agricultural standards.

The poor state of transportation infrastructure and the dearth of harmonized standards in the region were identified as the two largest constraints restricting faster East African economic growth, U.S - East African bilateral trade and East Africa Inter-regional trade.

In March, 2000, PDP conducted a sectoral assessment in the three East African countries specifically to assess the status Quo of the transportation and Agricultural Standards Sectors and design appropriate technical assistance activities. The objectives of the study were three fold:-

1. To better identify the predominant transportation and Agriculture Standards constraints in the region that inhibit trade
2. To propose appropriate technical assistance activities which would assist the region in overcoming constraints, specifically, to design two U.S based training activities for the summer of 2000.
3. To identify key players in the transportation and Agricultural Standards Sectors and recommend potential participants.

The expected output of the proposed activities is to assist in the implementation of reforms which can help reduce transportation costs and border difficulties thereby improving trade flow. The US visit was meant to exhibit good working examples in transportation management and harmonized standards. The visit is to be followed by in country workshops with a wider array of stakeholders in the East African Community region.

1.4 Summary of study tour

2.1 Participants

Uganda was represented by a Multi-displinary team comprising of Mr. Mulagwe Damas (MD, Uganda Grain Milling Company Ltd), Dr. Ben Manyindo (Asst. Executive Director, UNBS), Mrs. Joy Kabtsi (Legal Expert in the URA) and Mr. Okaasai S. Opolot (PAI - Phytosanitary and Quarantine Services - MAAIF). The tour lasted for 2 weeks (11th - 27th August, 2000).

The Ugandan delegation was fortunate to meet and discuss the highlights of the study tour with the Ugandan Ambassador H.E. Edith Ssempala and the Ugandan Second

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Trade and industry, the Rt. Hon. Brigadier Moses Ali.

2.2 Tour coverage

The tour activities comprised of:

- _ Key note speeches/lectures by the US leading personalities in various aspects of policy in Agriculture, standards and transportation
- _ Visits to the various US facilities in the Agricultural Research and Marketing sector
- _ Hands - on training in grain grading.

In the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington - DC, M/s Yvonne Anduaem facilitated discussion sessions while Jennifer Maurer Coordinated the tour.

The key issues discussed include:

- _ Code Alimentarius
- _ World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements
- _ US Agricultural exports in perspective of International trade
- _ African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)
- _ US Grain Inspection , sampling, grading and transportation
- _ Consensus making

2.3 Site visits

The East African delegates were conducted around various US facilities including:-

- _ Agricultural Research Center (ARC), National Visitor Center
- _ Beltsville Agricultural Research Centre, (Largest Agricultural Research Center in the World).

- _ Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) facilities at River Dale - (Maryland)
- _ Grain Marketing and Production Research Centre (Kansas State)
- _ American Institute of Baking (Kansas)
- _ International Grains Program, Kansas State University
- _ Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyard Administration Technical Services - Kansas City
- _ Houston GISPA field office (Texas)
- _ Houston Sea Port (Texas)

3.0 Lessons learned and recommendations

1. Enormous support the US Government gives to Agricultural Research and Private Sector Development.

The government facilitates agriculture starting from research in seeds through extension service all the way to marketing. Throughout the process, participatory involvement of all stakeholders, especially the private sector was apparent. This appears to be an indirect but effective way of subsidizing and encouraging development of the Agricultural sector.

2. The US government attaches importance and allocates resources for the development of Agricultural standards and their sustainable enforcement. Uganda's allocation of resources to the development of Agricultural standards and enforcement is inadequate although the country derives its Livelihood from Agricultural. Pest Risk Analysis, Public and Private Sector awareness about standards, functional analysis in agencies and interagency memoranda of understanding for effective enforcement of standards should be explored - in Uganda along with capacity building to foster trade.
3. US is pushing for increased trade i.e export of grain to East African countries. The East African countries and Uganda in particular, should push for bilateral trade.

The Ugandan government should exploit opportunities provided for in the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA) which encourages US trade with Africa.

4. There is an efficient flow of information in the U.S. The implications of this in terms of trade (promotion of trade) are great. East Africa and Uganda in particular should emphasize on building an efficient and effective information mechanisms in order to fully benefit from available international, regional and national trade opportunities.
5. Patriotism of the US personnel could not be missed. Every officer/person involved in the grain trade enjoyed his/her job with a common vision to making the American products the best in the world. Self esteem/confidence in the East Africans and Ugandans in particular would go along way to promote consumption and export of our local products.
6. The US has adopted a wholistic and integrated approach to trade, Government and Private sector play complementary roles in promoting export of the US products. This approach should be adopted by Uganda. On this vein, it is important to note the thorough job done by GISPA in the Inspection, sampling, grading, certification and handling of the US grain. There is no need for a pre-shipment inspection by firms such as SGS and ITS of grain originating from the US. SGS and ITS are not recognized in that country. For grain imports from that country, certificates of origin, phytosanitary and GISPA are enough for clearance in East Africa.

4.0 Way forward for Uganda in the implementation of the project

Proposed Action Plan for the implementation of USAID/ATRIP FUNDED PROJECT:
East Africa sub-region: Enhancing Transportation Management and Harmonizing standards to faster **US Agricultural** trade opportunities:-

The following action plan was proposed by the Uganda team as a way forward for the above project:-

1. Select/put in place the National Project Leadership

(Washington Group + WG)

2. Produce the tour report with recommendations and submit it to institutional leadership/heads of group represented in the tour
WG by September, 2000
3. Identify stakeholders and their roles
WG by September, 2000
4. Convene awareness workshop/meeting of stakeholders and chart a way forward for trade facilitation at National and Regional level
WG & USDA
(to be arranged, preferably by September 30, 2000)
5. Implementation of the workshop recommendations
6. Monitoring and evaluation of the adopted procedures (Continuos)