



The Republic of Uganda



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

## The FAO Representation in Uganda Congratulates the European Union on Europe Day

### EUROPEAN UNION - CHAMPIONING CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Climate change has been and continues to be one of the most critical development challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, posing the greatest threat to sustainable economic development. Developing countries are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Uganda is already experiencing signs and effects of climate change, manifested in the form of erratic rainfall patterns, floods and prolonged droughts. The impacts have included landslides, loss of biodiversity, land degradation and increased incidences of diseases, as well as pest and vector infestations in both humans and livestock. This curtails the socio-economic development targets spelt out in Vision 2040, especially as Uganda's economy is heavily dependent on natural resources.

Deforestation and Forest degradation is one of the causes of climate change. Uganda as a country, has over the time registered worrying trends of forest degradation, with the latest statistics placing the rate of deforestation at 200,000ha annually (State of Uganda's Forests 2015). The country's remaining natural forests are under severe pressure. The shortage of timber has had negative repercussions for the conservation of natural forests for their biodiversity and ecological values. With no sustainable source for wood and wood products the forest resource will continue to dwindle and likely to lead to a timber famine making Uganda a large timber importer, an environmental catastrophe.

#### INTERVENTION BY EUROPEAN UNION; The Sawlog Production Grant Scheme (SPGS III)

Since Dec 2015, the Food and agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been implementing a five year commercial forestry project – the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme phase III with funding from the European Union, to a tune of £16m (63 billion shillings).

The project, is a government of Uganda programme that is meant to consolidate and build on the achievements of the previous phases through establishment of an additional 31,000ha of forest plantations, but also support processing and utilisation, and strengthen the value chain of plantation grown wood.

It is anticipated that development of a commercial forestry industry will reduce pressure on natural forests as well as to supply the country's predicted timber needs.

Investment in timber plantations is vital to provide the bulk of Uganda's timber needs and also to compensate for the wood 'locked up' in protected areas. Well managed plantations can provide over 20 times the utilisable timber compared with an equivalent area of natural forest.

Through the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme (SPGS)



EU Ambassador to Uganda H.E. Kristian Schimdt observes a clonal eucalyptus cutting during an EU delegation field to SPGS supported beneficiaries in Mubende district.

Project, the European Union is promoting commercial tree planting by the Private sector through providing incentives in form of financial and technical support. The aim of the project is to increase incomes of the rural population through commercial tree planting by medium and large scale private sector actors and the local communities, while at the same time helping to mitigate climate change effects through intensive afforestation.

During Phase I & II of the project (2004- 2013), the European Union has supported the establishment of 47,000ha of commercial forest plantations by private sector actors, to a tune of £22m. These plantations are estimated to absorb an equivalent of 4.7m tons of carbon, in addition to creating rural job in forest plantations and support enterprises such tree nurseries.

SPGS III is implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on behalf of the government of Uganda. FAO expresses its gratitude to the Ministry of Water and Environment for the confidence entrusted and the excellent partnership and support provided for the implementation of the project. This



A pine forest plantation in Nakasongola Established with support from EU- SPGS grant.

intervention by the EU is in line with the UN sustainable Development Goal number 13 "to take action to combat Climate Change and its impacts". As a UN agency, FAO is proud to be associated with EU in delivering the SPGS project. FAO wishes to congratulate the European Union upon the Europe day and looks forward to continued partnerships in support to sustainable development.



Plantations have the potential to absorb carbon and contribute significantly to climate change mitigation



Beneficiaries of the EU funded- SPGS project, in a peer learning session about wood processing- during a field tour in Gulu- Northern Uganda