

# Coffee authority marks 25 years

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There are over 50 registered companies for coffee exportation in Uganda. UCDA is also promoting home consumption of coffee in a bid to help the country and farmers earn more from the sector.

“We want to make sure that everybody appreciates the value of coffee. This will enable improve on the investment in coffee and local consumption,” Niyibigira says.

Coffee consumption in Uganda has been increasing due to improved quality of coffee served and establishment of good brewing and vending outlets and enhanced promotion.

The UCDA also trains baristas to make lattes and cappuccinos, giving many Ugandans their first experience behind an espresso machine.

Quality in the coffee sector is a must, and for Ugandan coffee to compete favourably, UCDA has to enable Ugandan uphold quality. Plans are underway to review the Coffee laws that are governing the sector.

The revised law will have provision that looks at both farm and non-farm activities. This will enable us improve



Employees of Buginyanya Zonal Agricultural Research and development institute in Bulambuli district operating a wet coffee processing machine

on the quality,” says Lola Walusimbi, the UCDA communications officer.

## Coffee research

Niyibigira says research is ongoing at the National Coffee Research Institute to develop drought resistant varieties that are adaptive to the current climatic changes.

“The biggest challenges we have faced are coffee wilt, which almost swept all the coffee fields in the 1990’s. But in 2000 we started recovering,

and we are now on course” Niyibigira says.

There has also been progressive success on pest resistant varieties and so far over seven line seedlings have been released.

Streamlining of the coffee value chain, is also on agenda as the regulatory authority starts promotion of better post harvesting practices. We have the best robusta coffee in the world; we are positioning ourselves as the centre of robusta excellence and this can

be achieved if we cooperate with the farmers,” Niyibigira says.

## History of coffee

While Robusta coffee is indigenous to Uganda, Arabica coffee was imported into the country by the British colonialists in the early 1900s.

Arabica coffee tends to flourish in high altitude areas around Mt. Elgon and in south-western Uganda. In 1930, the Coffee Industry Board, was established to address quality control and by 1953,

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the functions of the board were expanded to include price setting. Six years later in 1959 it became known as the Coffee Marketing Board (CMB) and its functions were expanded to include coffee buying.

From the 1950s to the 1960s, Uganda witnessed a coffee boom. However it suffered a setback during the 1970 civil strife with production dropping by half.

In 1991, CMB was split into two entities.

These entities included the Coffee Marketing Board Ltd and UCDA which was charged with the responsibility of monitoring, regulating and advising the Government on policy issues.

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Until 1991, CMB used to reprocess and export coffee which it had purchased from the cooperative unions.

The price of coffee was fixed in the national budget and was never affected by fluctuations in the international coffee market. All this, however, changed with the liberalisation of the economy and consequently the sector.

## About UCDA

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UCDA has a mandate of promoting and overseeing the development of the entire coffee industry through supporting research; promoting production; controlling the quality and improving the marketing of coffee in order to optimise foreign exchange earnings for the country and increase farmer’s earnings.