

Roofings scoops exporter award

By Faridah Kulabako

Metal and steel manufacturing firm, Roofings Group, was crowned the exporter of the year for 2016. East Africa's largest steel manufacturer scooped the award at the 12th President's Export Awards event held at Imperial Royale Hotel, in Kampala on December 8.

Roofings was commended for its role in boosting regional exports despite the economic challenges, in addition to boosting the local construction industry through forward and backward linkages.

The awards organised by the Uganda Export Promotions Board sought to recognise the achievements of companies that continue to work towards a vibrant and dynamic export sector of the economy.

John Alintuma Nsamu was awarded the best export ambassador for promoting the development of Uganda's exports in Canada through creating a framework in which the Uganda export promotions Board is working with one of the premier global trade institutions to support Ugandan firms to easily connect with the buyers in Canada.



The minister of trade, Amelia Kyambadde and Prime minister, Dr Ruhakana Rugunda hand over an award to representatives from Roofings Uganda during the Uganda's Exporters Award at Imperial Royale Hotel, Kampala

Gold winners

The awards recognised a total of 46 exporting companies from 23 categories with Gold and Silver awards.

Gold Winners included Nile Breweries Limited (Spirits and Alcohol Beverages), Tororo Cement (Cement), Picfare (Paper and Paper Products), Movit Limited (Cosmetics), Wagagai (U) Ltd (Flowers and Cuttings), Mukwano Group of Companies (Edible Oils) and Pearl Dairies Ltd (Dairy and Products).

Others were Aponye (U) Ltd (Cereals, Pulses and Valued Added products), Ugacof Ltd (Coffee), Esco (U) Ltd (Cocoa), MC Leod Russells Uganda Ltd (Tea), Sadolin (Paints Products), KK Fresh Produce Exporters Ltd (Horticultural), The New Forest Company Ltd (Wood and Wood Articles), Harris International (Non-Alcoholic Beverages).

Criteria

To participate in the competition, companies had to have exported in the year 2015. They were then taken through a vetting process, done by a team of competent judges from the different government agencies that support and facilitate exports.

These included Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), National Planning Authority (NPA), Ministry of Agriculture, Private Sector Foundation Uganda (Psfu), Uganda Revenue Authority

(URA), Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) and Ministry of Trade, Industry and Co-operatives. Basing on the export value, judges chose the best exporter in each category.

In a speech read for him by Prime Minister Dr Ruhakana Rugunda, President Yoweri Museveni asked financial services providers to institute measures to increase the banked population so as to mobilise more savings and facilitate faster economic development.

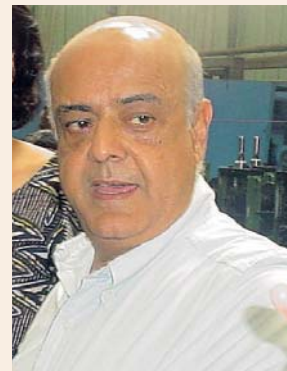
This, he said, is intended to enable the Government access funds to address bottlenecks in the economy, including underdeveloped infrastructure, inadequate human capital development and insufficient small markets to facilitate faster growth and attain middle income status by 2020.

Museveni said effective modes of transport such as quality roads, railways, ports and air transport are crucial boosting productivity and enable entrepreneurs move their products to market in a secure and timely manner.

The other bottlenecks that have to be addressed are the low contribution of manufacturing to the national economy, subsistence nature of agriculture, low value addition and corruption.

"We need to end the slavery of exporting raw materials. We need to focus on value addition and industrialisation to transform the economy,"

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Museveni said.

He said this will boost productivity and exports, thus increase earning from the current \$3b (sh10.8 trillion) posted last year.

The Uganda Export Promotion Board executive director, Elly Twineyo said Uganda needs to devise ways of growing her exports to meet the \$8b (sh28.7 trillion) that the Government targets to earn from exports by 2020.

Twineyo decried Uganda's low export performance, compared to imports, which he said causes a huge trade imbalance.

Uganda's exported goods worth \$3b (sh10.7 trillion) in 2015, down from \$3.14 (sh11.2 trillion) in 2014, compared to an import bill of \$5.5b (sh19.7 trillion) in 2015.

Twineyo, however, applauded the Government's

efforts in constructing power dams, saying that stable power is vital in supporting the growth of an export-led manufacturing sector.

Trade Minister Amelia Kyambadde urged Ugandan businesses to increase exports to close the trade deficit which stands at about \$2.5b (sh8.95 trillion).

She noted that promoting value addition, recapitalisation of the Uganda Development Bank, capitalisation of Uganda Development Corporation, establishment of border export zones and establishing the micro, small and medium enterprises department, will boost production for both local and export markets.

Export Week

The 2016 Export Week was organised under the theme

Export - to attain middle income status. The week was fundamentally aimed at creating local awareness on export business and the sector as a whole.

Several events were held, including an export walk, exhibition, export clinics and the president's export award gala, running from December 5 to 9, at the Uganda Manufacturers Association conference hall and gardens.

It started off with an export walk from Centenary Park to UMA Conference Hall.

During the week, different export clinics on fruits and vegetables, manufactured goods, fish and fish products, cereals and pulses were held, with players sharing ideas and devising ways on how to boost exports.

An export conference was also held, bringing together

stakeholder and policy makers to devise solutions so as to boost exports in order to attain middle income status by 2020.

Among the challenges shared were costly and unreliable electricity, high cost of credit, poor road infrastructure and low productivity among others.

Grand winners speak

According Sikalander Lalani, the Roofings Group chairman, 2015/2016 was a challenging year for the still industry in the region. "This has not been an easy year, but because of our quality we have stood out. We would like to thank our customers for supporting us," he said.

Meanwhile, Roofings Group executive director Oliver Lalani attributed the win to continued quality production and good customer relations. Last year, Roofings exported products amounting to over \$40m (sh142b).

Their main export products are; iron sheets, which account for 60% of all their exports. Other products are nails, hollow sections, TMT bar products, binding, razor barbed wires, chain links, flat sheets, plates among others. Oliver Lalani says their products are mainly sold in the East Africa and DR Congo.

"Rwanda is one of our main markets, we also have South Sudan, but because of the conflict there, our sales have fallen by about 50%," Oliver Lalani said.