

# Uganda-EU enjoy positive trade balance

By Prossy Nandudu

For the first time since 2015, Uganda has registered a positive trade balance with the EU of €2m. The EU has been importing from Uganda proportionately more than exporting to Uganda since the last three years.

Imports of coffee (€262m or more than 50% of the total) increased by 15% in the last three years, cocoa by 60% becoming the fourth highest import (€36m) and tobacco by 15% (5th highest at €32m) while fisheries (second highest at €56m euros) and cut flowers (third at €47m) slightly decreased. Although only 3% of the total imports of other vegetables and fruits almost doubled at €15m in 2015.

Promoters and exporters of Ugandan coffee can still access European markets with or without signing the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the European Union (EU). This is possible under the provisions of the Everything but Arms deal.

According to Joseph Nkandu, the executive director of the National



Coffee farmers in developing countries such as Uganda have called for preferential treatment on the market to allow them grow

Union of Coffee Agribusiness and Farm Enterprises (NUCAFE), much as there is that provision, before Uganda signs the EPAs, there should be a special and preferential treatment for a developing country to enable its industries to grow.

"There should be what I call special preferential treatment for a developing country such as Uganda that some concession should be made taking

into consideration the growing industry.

This is such that we, for example, do not get very cheap processed coffee coming here to compete with the local coffee roasting industries," said Nkandu.

#### Strategic crop

He adds that apart from coffee which is a strategic crop for Uganda, other

#### UGANDANS CAN STILL EXPORT COFFEE WITHOUT THE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (EPA)

products which the Government believes are a priority or of strategic importance should be protected.

"The moment Uganda opens up under the principal of reciprocity that is when you open up your market and I open mine, without any special consideration then you are not helping the developing countries and young economies to grow," Nkandu added.

He added that EU countries first allowed their industries to develop to a certain level before opening up to other economies, adding that these have been accompanied with stringent measures to especially countries in Afro Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) exporting their food items in those countries.

"I think those would be strong conditionalities for EU to consider

#### CURRENT EXPORTS

Latest records from Uganda Coffee Development Authority shows an improvement. For example, in December, the country exported 424,451 bags of coffee, which weighed 60kg each from 408,027 bags exported the previous month. This indicated a 23.9% increase in volume. The executive director of UCDA, Dr Emmanuel Iyamulemye Niyibigira, said the outlook for the commodity gets better each week as they are now registering more than 400,000kg up from the previous records. He also expressed optimism that the next month the country will continue to register good performance.

other than Uganda fully stripping itself naked. Much as it is a special trading block for us, deliberate actions that will help the young manufacturers, who still roasts their and then takes to a machine to grind before packaging for sale, can be given room to also automate if need be," he added.

The main destination markets for coffee include the US and Japan, Switzerland, Germany, Sudan, Italy and Belgium. Ugandan commercial coffee is often prepared in global trading centres and exported after adding value to it.

#### Trade ministry's take

According to the trade minister, Ameila Kyambadde the EU ranks second as Uganda's top export destination with exports valued at \$443m as of 2015.



## UIRI Participates in UBORA

UBORA: Euro-African Open Biomedical Engineering e-platform for Innovation through Education



Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) has partnered with Researchers from University of Pisa, Italy (project coordinator), Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain, KTH School of Technology and Health, Sweden, University of Tartu, Estonia, Kenyatta University and an Estonian custom software development company, Agileworks to participate in the "UBORA: Euro-African Open Biomedical Engineering e-Platform for Innovation through Education" project. This project is funded by the EU under the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme which aims at creating an e-Infrastructure, UBORA, for open source co-design of new solutions to face current and future healthcare challenges of Europe and Africa. The project will exploit networking, knowledge on rapid prototyping of new ideas and sharing of safety criteria and performance data. The e-Infrastructure will be implemented to foster advances in education and the development of innovative solutions in Biomedical Engineering, both of which are flywheels for emerging and developed economies. It is conceived as a virtual platform for generating, exchanging, improving and implementing creative ideas in Biomedical Engineering underpinned by a solid safety assessment framework. Besides the provision of resources with designs, blueprints and support on safety assessment and harmonization, specific sections for needs identification, project management, repositories and fund raising are also foreseen.

UBORA ("excellence" in Swahili) brings together European and African universities, under the lead of Prof. Arti Ahluwalia (University of Pisa), and their associated technological hubs, biomedical prototyping laboratories and incubators, national and international policymakers and committed stakeholders propelled by a series of summer schools and competitions.

"The project's focus is on innovation through biomedical

engineering education, as the technological hub for the African partners we hope to design and develop open-source medical devices that are compliant with European standards whose designs are freely shared," says Philippa Makobore, the project lead for UIRI in an interview with the New Vision.

Through the UBORA e-Infrastructure, the biomedical community can generate and share open data and blueprints of biomedical devices, accompanied by the required procedures for respecting quality assurance, and for assessing performance and safety. When properly implemented, as guaranteed by authorized Notified Bodies, these medical devices can safely be used in hospitals and on patients. In a nutshell, UBORA couples the open design philosophy with Europe's leadership in quality control and safety assurance, guaranteeing better health and opportunities for sustainable growth.



UBORA partners at the project's kick-off meeting in Pisa, Italy (17th Jan. 2017)

"Every year we train a cohort of biomedical, electrical and computer engineering undergraduate students from universities and vocational institutes across Uganda. The UBORA platform will be an extremely valuable tool for these students who need hands on skills for the design and development of their projects," observes Makobore.

#### 2017 UBORA DESIGN COMPETITION

The first design competition of the UBORA project will focus on innovative biomedical engineering solutions to reduce child mortality. The winners of the design competition will be invited to attend the 2017 UBORA Summer School, which will take place at Kenyatta University in Nairobi and in which the co-design of biomedical devices will be promoted by applying the CDIO ("Conceive-Design-Implement-Operate") project-based learning and product development approach. The UBORA e-Infrastructure is being constructed and provided with real open-access cases of study linked to the development of real medical devices connected to global health concerns. The UBORA e-Infrastructure will be officially presented and actively used in the mentioned summer school, which is open to students from the members of the consortium and from ABEC: The African Biomedical Engineering Consortium. For additional information, please visit the UBORA website: <http://ubora-biomedical.org> or contact UBORA at: [info@UBORA-biomedical.org](mailto:info@UBORA-biomedical.org).

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