

## **2023 Cohort: Mak Flags off 50 for Agrostudies Apprenticeship Programme in Israel**

The Honorary Consul of Israel in Uganda, Mrs. Ishta K. Muganga on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023 flagged off 50 students for the Agrostudies Apprenticeship programme in Israel. 37 of the students are from Makerere University and 13 from Busitema University. The first group of students left on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The event held at the Yusuf Lule Central Teaching Facility at Makerere University was graced by among others, the Commissioner, Directorate of Planning and Development at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Mr. Walter Anguzu; the Commissioner, Directorate of Agricultural Extension Services at MAAIF represented by Mr. Steven Magume; the Coordinator of the programme at Busitema University, Dr Godfrey Lubadde; the Principal, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES), Makerere University represented by the Deputy Principal, Prof. Yazidhi Bamutaze; and the Head, Department of Agricultural Production at CAES, Dr Mildred Ochwo- Ssemakula. In Uganda, implementation of the programme commenced in 2013 but was institutionalised in 2021. Coordinated by Makerere University through the Department of Agricultural Production, CAES, the programme has over the years benefited about 2000 students.

### **About the Agrostudies programme**

The Agrostudies programme, built with the support and oversight from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture, focuses on capacity building through practical and professional knowledge transfer in the field of agriculture, and promotes food security around the world by providing the participants with a creative, practical and dynamic educational framework.

The programme, operating since 2005, trains interns from Southeast Asia and Africa on carefully selected farms throughout Israel, as part of Israel support for developing countries. The programme is an integral part of the agricultural studies of the participants in their home countries, with the goal of providing an opportunity for practical experiential learning in advanced, modern agricultural methods.

The programme combines frontal instruction and theoretical studies with work in practical agricultural internships on farms around Israel. The internships are based on the “Learning by Doing” method, by which the participants gain first-hand experience of advanced agricultural technologies and methods at an international standard in various specializations. The goal of the programme is to directly connect the theoretical knowledge the participants study to the implementation of modern agriculture. At the end of the programme, the participants leave with professional experience and knowledge, allowing them to develop and promote the agricultural

sector in their country. The Agrostudies Institute in Israel, which is the international centre for agricultural interns, coordinates the programme.

### **The flag off ceremony**

During the flag off ceremony, the 2021-2022 alumni of the Agrostudies programme shared their experiences and guided the 2023 cohort on the activities and appropriate code of conduct while in Israel. Activities carried out during the one-year internship programme include working on different crop, poultry and dairy production farms. While on the farms, the students acquire skills in land preparation, green house management, drip and sprinkler irrigation, planting, weeding, grafting and seedling production, disease management, harvest and post-harvest management, packaging, value addition and marketing, hatchery management, vaccination, feeding and feed formulation, slaughtering and dressing, calf management, machine milking, artificial insemination, and waste management. The students are also exposed to theoretical studies about different agricultural fields and the diverse cultures of the people of Israel and the countries of the trainees. In their presentation, the alumni led by Mr. Dancan Mugizi, Mr. Oketch Jacob, and Mr. Bua Morris appreciated the governments of Israel and Uganda, noting that the trainings had exposed them to knowledge and skills in modern agricultural systems and technologies. “Overall, the programme changed our mind-set about agriculture as a rewarding enterprise. We also acquired a number of soft skills and became more resilient. We thank the governments of Uganda and Israel, the University Management, and the national programme coordinators for the tremendous work that has made the programme so enjoyable to students and a success.”

### **Remarks**

In her remarks, the Honorary Consul of Israel in Uganda, Mrs. Ishta K. Muganga congratulated the students for having emerged successful out of over 600 applicants. Briefing the students on Israel, she cautioned them to show commitment to the programme and project a good image of Uganda. “Do what is right to avoid closing the opportunity for others. Israel has some of the best farmers in the world. Maximise your time to acquire knowledge and skills in different fields. There are numerous opportunities in Israel but for only those who are organized. You need to work as a team if you are to make significant strides, and when you return, deploy the knowledge acquired skilfully.”

Briefing the students on NDP III that seeks to make Agriculture profitable and sustainable, the Commissioner, Directorate of Planning and Development at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries (MAAIF), Mr. Walter Anguzu said a lot still needed to be done to improve the sector. “Many of our people are still in subsistence farming, grappling with challenges of low production, limited knowledge and skills, limited access to finances and market, and post-harvest losses. Our target is increase exports. Without exposure, we cannot reach where we need

to be. We are grateful for this programme and I implore all of you beneficiaries to fully utilize this opportunity and acquire skills that will contribute to the transformation of agriculture in our country.”

On behalf of the Commissioner, Directorate of Agricultural Extension Services at MAAIF, Mr. Steven Magume congratulated the students upon acquiring a ‘golden’ opportunity to practice in one of the best agricultural countries. He appealed to the students to project a good image of the country when they go to Israel, and to work towards improving their soft skills. “Hard skills enable you to get a job but soft skills that include self-esteem, confidence, good attitude, and time management will keep you there.”

Highlighting the different national and global development programmes, the Deputy Principal of CAES, Prof. Yazidhi Bamutaze emphasized the importance of Agriculture in the transformation nation states, and the need to improve investment in the sector. He appreciated the governments of Israel and Uganda for presenting an opportunity to Ugandan students to improve their Agrostudies skills. “As a University, we have a duty to develop human capital. The notion of producing graduates that are skilled is paramount in the transformation agenda of our country. The Agrostudies programme has played a vital role in changing the mind-set and enhancing the skills of many of our students.”

Dr Narisi Mubangizi, Lecturer in the Department of Extension and Innovation Studies, also part of the coordination team, urged the students to be good ambassadors and avoid engaging in activities that will tarnish the image of the country. “Focus on what you are going for, acquisition of knowledge and skills, and ensure you successfully complete the programme. The diploma you get at the end of the programme is very marketable worldwide. Similarly, Dr Mildred Ochwo-Ssemakula, Head of the Coordination team implored the students to appreciate the importance of the programme and focus on acquiring knowledge and skills that will enable them make impact of the agricultural sector back home.

**Related link:** <https://news.mak.ac.ug/2022/10/mak-flags-off-50-students-for-agrostudies-internship-in-israel/>

**See details on the 2021-2022 cohort in Israel in the attachment below;**