



Speech by Uganda Minister of Trade Industry and Cooperatives, Hon. Francis Mwebesa, at the 10th African Grain Trade Summit held from 5th -7th October 2023, at Speke Hotel, Kampala, Uganda.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, and fellow participants of the Grain Trade Summit,

I am truly honoured to stand before you today as the Minister of Trade of the Republic of Uganda, representing our nation at this significant Africa Grain Trade Summit. I extend my warmest welcome to all the delegates, speakers, experts, and partners who have gathered here to deliberate upon one of the most critical facets of our continent's agricultural landscape.

Africa, as we all know, is blessed with abundant agricultural resources; yet we face challenges in harnessing this potential to ensure food security, economic growth, and poverty alleviation. The grain sector is at the heart of this challenge and offers tremendous opportunities for transformation. It is our responsibility as African nations to seize these opportunities and chart a course toward sustainable agricultural development.

In Uganda, we recognize the importance of the grain trade not only in addressing food security but also in contributing significantly to our economy. The grain sector plays a crucial role in job creation, income generation, and the overall well-being of our people. However, like many other African countries, we also face numerous hurdles in maximizing the potential of our grain industry. Challenges such as post-harvest losses, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of access to finance remain significant obstacles.

To address these challenges, the Government of Uganda is committed to implementing a range of policies and initiatives. These include investments in modernizing our agricultural infrastructure, enhancing our storage and processing facilities, and promoting value addition to our grain products. We are also working to strengthen partnerships with both local and international stakeholders, including private sector actors, to foster innovation and growth in the grain sector.

Moreover, Uganda recognizes the importance of regional cooperation and integration in achieving a thriving grain trade across Africa. The East African Community, of which Uganda is a member, is a testament to our commitment to regional integration. We believe that by fostering stronger ties with our neighbours, we can create a more seamless and efficient grain trade ecosystem that benefits all our nations.

The theme of this summit, "Defining Africa's Place in the Global Grain Trade for Sustainability," underscores a multi-faceted approach. As we delve deeper into our discussions, we are challenged to address several pivotal aspects that will shape our agricultural future:

1. **Data Collection & Dissemination:** In our rapidly advancing digital age, data-driven decision-making is paramount. Establishing robust mechanisms for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data across the entire value chain will empower us to make informed, evidence-based policies, ensuring the growth and resilience of our grain sector.



2. **Production of Grains and Pulses:** To enhance our global competitiveness, it's essential to bolster the production of diverse grains and pulses. This will require innovative farming practices, technological adaptation, and an emphasis on quality alongside quantity.
3. **Standards Across the Value Chain:** To position African grains and pulses on the global map, we need to establish and adhere to the highest standards. From sowing to harvesting, processing to packaging, and distribution to sales – excellence at every step will differentiate us. And ensure competitiveness in the global arena.
4. **Facilitating Healthy Consumption of Food:** As custodians of this continent's nutrition, it is our duty to promote and facilitate the consumption of healthy, balanced diets. Grains and pulses, fortified with essential nutrients, should be accessible and affordable to all.
5. **Food Safety:** Beyond production, the safety of our food products is paramount. Implementing stringent safety protocols, periodic checks, and educating all actors across the entire value chain about best practices will go a long way in ensuring that our grains are not just abundant, but also safe.
6. **Identifying and Seizing Global Trade Opportunities:** The world is an open market, and Africa has the potential to be its major supplier. By identifying, understanding, and capitalizing on global trade avenues, we can ensure that African grains find their rightful place on dining tables across the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we engage in discussions over these critical areas, let us remember that we are crafting a narrative. A narrative that showcases Africa not just as a participant, but as a formidable player in the global grain trade. Our discussions today, our actions tomorrow, will shape the grain story of Africa.

I therefore encourage all participants to think creatively, share experiences, and identify actionable strategies to enhance grain trade in Africa. Let us explore opportunities for cross-border trade, technology adoption, and policy harmonization. Let us also consider the role of innovation, digitalization, and sustainable farming practices in ensuring a prosperous grain sector for our continent.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to the organizers of this summit for providing us with this invaluable platform to collaborate and learn from one another. Together, we can overcome the challenges and unlock the immense potential of the grain trade in Africa. Let us work hand in hand, as partners, to build a brighter and more prosperous future for our nations and our people.

Thank you, and I wish you all a productive and successful Africa Grain Trade Summit.